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MAY 29, 2022

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NEARBY

HC sets deadline for completion of probe

BENGALURU

In an unprecedented order, the High Court of Karnataka has fixed a time frame of 60 days and 90 days, respectively, for completion of investigation in petty offences and the serious/heinous offences by the police and other investigating agencies in the State.

BENGALURU ▸ PAGE 5

Empowering city's ward committees

BENGALURU

Over 250 ward committee members spread over 100 wards convened to brainstorm ideas to empower ward committees and make them more effective.

BENGALURU ▸ PAGE 3

Cong. leaders question choice of poll candidates

BENGALURU

Peeved over denial of ticket to contest the just-concluded MLC elections in the State, several aspirants of the Congress have decided to raise the issue of criteria adopted in selection of MLC candidates during the two-day Chintan Shivir of the party to be held from June 2.

KARNATAKA ▸ PAGE 6

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Did not cause shame in eight-year rule: Modi

In poll-bound Gujarat, PM lists welfare measures of his govt.

MAHESH LANGA
AHMEDABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday, in his home State of Gujarat, said that in his eight years as the Prime Minister, he spared no effort to serve the people of the country. He also underscored that during the eight years' reign, he had not done anything nor allowed anyone to do any such thing that would make the people of the State hang their heads in shame.

On Saturday, Mr. Modi was in poll-bound Gujarat to inaugurate a new hospital in Atkot near Rajkot, where he also addressed a poll rally. Later, in Gandhinagar, he inaugurated a nano urea plant and also addressed a gathering of members of cooperative societies.

"In the last eight years, we have made honest attempts to build the kind of India that Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel dreamt about," Mr. Modi said. "As the country became independent, Mahatma Gandhi wanted an India in which the poor, Dalits, tribals and women are empowered, where cleanliness and health are part of life, where economy is based on local solutions and the country is *atmanirbhar* or self-reliant," he said, stressing that his government had worked for all this during the eight years.

Home ground: PM Narendra Modi addressing leaders of cooperative institutions in Gandhinagar. • VIJAY SONEJI

Reaching out

Giving credit to the people of Gujarat for imparting values and education, PM Modi spoke on how deeply he was influenced by the values and culture of the State that taught him to live and work for society.

His lavish praise for the people and culture of Gujarat is being seen as an important step to strengthen his bond as Gujarat goes to the crucial Assembly election in December this year.

During his address in Atkot, the PM talked about the various welfare measures his government had taken to help the people since 2014 and particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic that ravaged livelihoods. "When the epidemic struck, the government quickly opened the granaries for the poor and even today free ration is being given to them," he said.

He also highlighted other measures such as free vaccines to all, cash transfer to women and small and marginal farmers in their bank accounts, to providing tap water to houses in villages.

Addressing over 7,000 members of various cooperative institutions, the Prime Minister said that prosperity in Gujarat's villages was thanks to the robust dairy cooperatives set up by the people of the State.

Twin hurdles hinder India's maritime role

Infrastructure constraints, delay in postings causing setback, says official

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

As the Quad grouping of India, Australia, Japan and the U.S. looks to roll out an Indo-Pacific maritime domain awareness (MDA) initiative for information sharing and maritime surveillance across the region, two issues limit India's ability to further expand its role, say government officials. These are infrastructure constraints and continued delay in posting Indian liaison officers at other facilities and centres in the region.

"There is interest and there are requests from several countries to post international liaison officers (ILO) at the Indian Navy's Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) but it cannot induct any more at the moment due to infrastructure constraints. A proposal for expansion has been pending with the Defence Ministry for two years now," a government official told *The Hindu* on condition of anonymity, which was also acknowledged by diplomatic sources.

Last December, Navy chief Admiral R. Hari Kumar said that ILOs from 14 countries have been invited to join the IFC-IOR. South Block officials said there is interest from many more countries in the region and beyond.

Info exchange: Delegates attending a maritime information sharing workshop by the Indian Navy at the IFC-IOR. • FILE PHOTO

SPECIAL

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 8

No cases of monkeypox in India so far

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

India has not registered any case of monkeypox so far, but the disease that is spreading globally is being tracked closely, officials said on Saturday.

The country is also monitoring the alert by the World Health Organization to the rise in reported cases of acute hepatitis of unexplained cause in children from some parts of the world, a Union Health Ministry official said.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 8

Excess fare: Over 90 cases filed against taxi drivers

SUCHITH KIDIYOOR
BENGALURU

Following complaints about taxi aggregators charging excess fare, the Transport Department has booked over 90 cases. But the cases have been booked against the drivers who have attached their vehicles with Ola, Uber and other operators, and not the aggregators, which has drawn the ire of many. Officials say there are legal hurdles, and aggregators cannot be booked for fare violations.

"We have been receiving complaints about taxi aggregators charging fares more than what has been fixed by the State government. Now, our officials are enforcing the rules and booking the cases," said Transport Commissioner N. Shivakumar.

"A total of 94 cases have been booked so far. They are filed after checking the bill generated on the mobile app of passengers and drivers. In many cases, our officials found that excess fares of ₹50 to ₹70 were being charged. The cases have been booked against taxis attached to Ola, Uber, and other taxi operators," said Joint Commissioner (Bengaluru Urban) K.T. Halaswamy.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 5

IndiGo fined for denying boarding

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

In a first for any airline in the country, the Directorate-General of Civil Aviation has imposed a fine of ₹5 lakh on IndiGo for denying boarding to a boy with special needs earlier this month at Ranchi airport.

On May 7, a wheelchair-bound boy accompanied by his parents, was stopped from boarding an IndiGo flight because the airline said he was "visibly in panic" and a safety risk.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 8

Women in khaki

In Tamil Nadu, they are moulded in a training school inside the Vellore Fort

C. VENKATACHALAPATHY

Vellore town is known for educational institutions offering professional programmes in engineering and medicine. But there is another institution that trains young women for a career in the Tamil Nadu Police.

The Police Training School at Tipu Mahal, inside the Vellore Fort on 29 acres of land in the heart of the town, has been giving basic training to constable, sub-inspector and deputy superintendent of police recruits and institutional training to IPS probationers for a long time now. It started as the District Recruits School in 1896 and was upgraded as the Central Recruits School, catering to the training needs of a few districts, in 1908.

Of the 277 Grade 2 woman constable trainees, Tiruvannamalai has sent the highest number of 147, followed by Tirupattur (67), Krishnagiri (42) and Kancheepuram (24). "The course has both classroom learning and practical sessions with trainees given accommodation inside the school," an official says. On an average, nearly 300 trainees, mostly constables, are trained for seven months on the campus, followed by a month-long practical course at police stations in the district.

The trainees are taught law, including the Criminal Procedure Code and the Indian Penal Code, parade, firing, handling of weapons and map reading. They are trained in engaging with the public, especially at police stations.

Even at peak summer, with temperatures touching the mid-40s, the recruits give off their best during the training.

All together: Women trainees march in step at the Police Training School inside the Vellore Fort in Tamil Nadu.

Perfect poise: Guns in hand.

Up with the lark: At the morning physical training.

On the ground: A lathi drill in progress.

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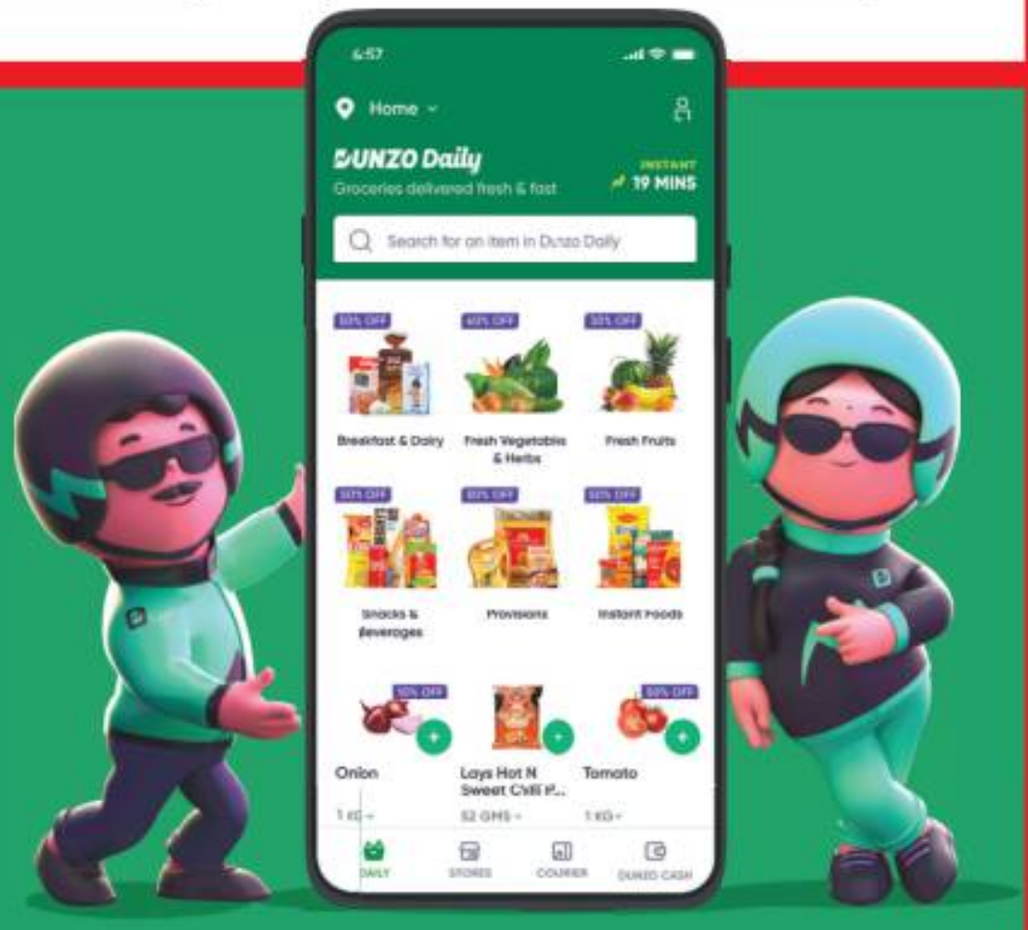

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Highly Educated Beautiful Girl Sc Hindu Mala, BE MBA IIM Bangalore, Asst. Manager, IOCL Mysore, 12Lks Year Dob 30-11-1991, Ht163Cms Solicit Proposals Well Settled Families Contact: 8919394072.

PHD, 5FT 3inch, 40yrs, Hindu, CEO at Blr. Expecting a suitable match (cast no bar). Ph: 9841023131

DOCTOR

RC CHRISTIAN Nadar, 31/168cm, Doctor, M.D (Gen.Med) persuing D.M. (Clinical Immunology & Rheumatology) seeks P.G Doctor / any super Speciality Doctor/ IAS/ Group I services Groom. Ct : 93311 93790.

SC, AGE 32, Fair, MBBS, MD, Doctor, Chennai. Seeks: Doctor, B.E in MNC or Any Govt. 9443882088, 7397438397

DR PG, Hindu Nadar Bride, 1996/ 170cm, Seeks DR Groom(UG/PG). 9976610580.

MCH SURGICAL Oncology (Ongoing), 27, 5ft 8inch, slim, good looking, Rohini, Rishabam seek DM / MCH / DrNB doing vegetarian groom, 27-30, from Chennai. CNB. Contact 6383189302

DOCTOR GIRL MD Anesthesiology 32/ 165 from affluent elite family of doctors.Working in top hospital Chennai. Fair beautiful good mannered andcultured. Father doctor Kerala Nair . Engineer & Doctor grooms with MD MS MCh DM from good family background from Kerala and TamilNadu preferable. Ct: 9840050381 9840985383

Pillai/ Mudaliar 30/167cm avittam slim MD (Gen Medicine) Doctor works in pvt medical college seeks suitable doctor/civil service groom from TN/ Pondicherry Ct: 9566307322

FINANCE / BANKING

38/ F, Hindu, SC, Bank Officer, divorcee, expects value oriented person. Suitable partner preferred. - contact no: 9962230051

IAS / ALLIED SERVICES

KERALITE HINDU girl, Asst. Commissioner, IRS. DOB:- 20.10.1990, 155 cm. Seeks groom preferably Civil Servants/ Doctors/ Similar Group A officers. Contact : 9495033834.

MALAYALAM

FIRST GENERATION believer parents of Dental Dr. & IAS Aspirant 24 yrs seek born again bride groom pref Engrs/IAS/Govt.Officers sumykumar93@gmail.com

HINDU NAIR 30/160 Shuddha Star Chothi, educated in UAE, BA (Hons) . Working for MNC Bank, Bangalore. Seeks well educated groom with clean habits, CT: 9597336489

PROPOSALS FROM boys with matching profile for Nair girl, born October 1983, 158cms fair athletic M.Sc SWE, senior systems analyst on deputation to Toronto, expected back before the end of the year. Contact 9446022706 or nairjk54@gmail.com

NAIR GIRL,26 doing MD, General Medicine. PG doctors interested.9847334042

ALLIANCE INVITED from executives/ PQ/well estd. matches preferably working in the Govt sector for Vishwakarma Girl (C)/28/MTech/ 165cm/Makam, single daughter of class 1 officer rtd. (Malayalees only) Cont – 9535031849

TAMIL

TAMIL MUSLIM ,25/162 cm MBBS - philippines, V.Fair, good looking seeks well educated and settled groom from respectable family. Ct - 9841327309

MUSLIM GIRL 33/173 Sr. SWE in UK on work visa, Seeks IT Professionals groom age below 37 and above 173cm willing to relocate. Cont: 9003765355

CHRISTIAN BRIDE, 23yrs, Studying MS in USA, seeks End Time Message Christian Ct: saranm_777@yahoo.com

TAMIL SUNNYMUSLIM Girl 26 Years MBBS Chennai seeks Unmarried Muslim MBBS (IndianUniv) Boy Call 9500180768

CHRISTIAN 32 years BE Non-IT Working in MNC at Chennai Seeks BE Non-IT Working Groom from a literate Decent Christian Family Contact: 94443 25317.

VERY RICH educated Christian family invites marriage Proposal for their daughter Post-graduate, fair, beautiful, God fearing from a rich Christian family. Bridegroom should be well educated and age upto 34 send bio-data to 9840820508.

OUR TWIN girls both BE/MNC 25/5.5ft slim settled Chennai seeks suitable Tamil muslim grooms Ct:98412 17645.

TAMIL

CHRISTIAN 26/165 Born again fair good looking MS employed Canada seeks God fearing well educated employed willing to settle in Canada Christian groom. Caste no bar. 9894234894

CSI CHRISTIAN Nadar Girl Fair, Good Looking, 03-04-1986 born / 152cm / M.Sc M.Phil, working as Assistant Professor in a Reputed Women's College, Mount Road, Chennai. Both Parents Doctors (Private). Suitable Alliance, Employed / Settled in Chennai / With Clean Habits from Same Community. Contact 9841182514

B.TECH IIT CS Dual, Girl 24/178cm Pillai, MNC BLR premium salary, seeks compatible groom Veg community/India based 9940019503

PILLAI/ MUDALIAR: 32 / Good Looking, MBBS, MD Final Yr, Well Settled Family, Seeks Groom aged 32-35, Engineer/ Business /Doctor - 9345855735

MUDALIAR (CASTE no bar), 42/155, PhD (Pharma), employed in MNC seeks qualified employed groom, India/Abroad, Contact: 9444675720, 9282129789, rajasekaranseguru@gmail.com

HINDU, VELLALAR, Pillai,34/167cms, Mirugaserisham, BE.MS.US. Seeks bridegroom from US, Pillai / other subsect. Ct: 98424 53050 / 96774 11643

AGAMUDI MUDALIAR,ELITE Family Sep91/165,PG,Working HR MNC Seeks MS/ M.Tech Groom. 9952997553 / 9176780777

GIRL 34 yrs,Fair, Mithunam, B.Com, MBA,Grammani ,working, Seeks suitable groom. Contact: 9445287838

SAIVA PILLAI 30 Thiruvathirai 165 BTech MBA MNC seeks from Well Settled Groom. 044 48041602 / 9643003640

HASTHAM 34/154 fair MCA Upper mid Clas Seeks Mudaliar / pillai professionally Qualified Groom 8220757159

MUDALIAR (CNB) 24/165, BE, MS (UK) , MNC, Data Analyst, London, Elite Family, Seeks Groom Any Abroad / Business – 8925019776

✔ SAIVA VELLALA Pillai (Veg) 41/ 162 BE Divorcee Seeks Any Degree Well Employed Groom below 45, Send BH (P) to Watsapp: 9342602187 / muthuvel4364@gmail.com

ASST. PROF. Tuluva Vellal Mudaliar Good looking Girl 34 Uthirattathy, Meenam, Ph.D(Physics), Family Seeks Alliance from First and Unmarried Bachelor Bridegroom Aged 34–36 Yrs, Employed, Caste no bar. Contact: After 7 PM; 7550245659

PILLAI DOCTOR Girl–MS(OG),Fair, Slim,5ft 8inch, 27 yrs, Convent Educated, Doctor Family–Wants Bridegroom with any Equivalent Community/ Education 9843086263

VANNIAR UTHIRAM Good looking 33/ 167, PG, SWE, Divorcee. No issue. Seeks well employed issueless groom from Good family. Cont: 7539960229

HINDU EZHAVA 34, MCA, Asst Manager in Govt bank, seeking a well qualified Groom under 38 yrs from South TamilNadu. Caste no bar, Contact : 9489944130

HINDU AD 29 MCA Seeks Educated Employed Groom 8610410886

HINDU NADAR Girl 28 yrs 167 cm, wheatish, 64 kg, M.E Assistant Professor in Engg college, Upper middle class. Seeks equally qualified boy in job / business. Ct: 96265 15511

HINDU SC PR Kongu 1984 MBBS DCH Doctor, working in Govt Hospital seeks suitable groom.Ct:94436-80973.

SC AD 27 M.Sc employed Pooraattathi Natchathiram Meena Rasi seeks suitable groom. 9940242293/ 9176087584

IYER VADAMA 46yrs Hastham Widow Supvr. central Govt. seeks Iyer/Iyengar Graduate Bride Groom, unmarried/divorcee/ widower contact: 96000 50865

28YRS BE.Comp.Sc Kattu Naicker (Veda Naicker) Native: Karur wants suitable Bridegroom same caste preferred. PH: 94871-21867.

TAMIL VISWAKARMA 39/150 fair Thiruvonam/ Rich / ME seeks suitable Same Caste Groom. 9486320982

PILLAI 23/158 BE Singapore uthradam seeks well qualified Singapore Citizen or PR only Geetham 9884858014

MBBS, MD (Govt) Age.26, Good Looking, Well Settled, Only one Daughter. Need: Dr,BE, Any PG. Ct: 6374767370

HINDU AD/PR 38/160 Widow, no child. ME, Lecturer at Trichy seeks edu groom, CNB Age upto 44 Ct:7406401199

BALIJA, 1990 born, CA triplet, 5ft 5inch charming seeks professional groom, ct: 7339373793

HINDU Chettiar/ Pillai Kanni Hastam 40/158 B.Sc Psy,B.Sc VC Dip TTC Artist, Self Empld Veg Wheatish Marriage invalid by Court, Seeks Groom Brahmin /Other caste unmarried / Divorced(no Child)/Spritual 8072115712.

TAMIL

HINDU, DIVORCE, 33, general category,doctor, has a kid. FC/BC/MBC groom pref. 7868806479

VANNIAR+ MUDALIAR 29/162, Fair & Beautiful, B.Arch, Business, Chennai, Only Daughter, lite Family, Seeks Affluent Business Groom Chennai or Coimbatore– 9840480334, 8939012419

HINDU, SC Adi Dravida, BE–MBA, working in Accenture, Age – 29, contact: 9444991091.

VANNIYAKULA KSHATRIYAR Fair, Slim, 25/164, Avitam, B.E Seeks Groom from Well Settled family. Ct:- 9840028346

HINDU NADAR, 1991 /165CM, MBBS.,MD (Anaesthesia), Pooram, Katagam, Fair seeks Suitable Groom. reshmim91@gmail.com, 9942085205

TAMIL HINDU, 1989 Born, Homely Bride, Rich Family, Hastham, seeks Groom, 1984 - 89 Born, Unmarried, Handsome Well settled Business Family in South India, CNB. amjmduad@yahoo.com

AGAMUDAYA MUDALIAR 24,156 cms, Doctor working as J.R.JIPMER, Father Advocate. Mother Doctor. Looking suitable well educated Groom from same community Ct: 9443242281

HINDU SC AD 27 Fair, B.E Trichy Seeks Groom from Same Caste: 9750040359 / 9442539235

SC, AD, Girl, S/W, Fair, 30yrs. 6 + 7 P.A. Wanted Suitable Groom. Call : 9790723366

27, FAIR, B.Tech. M.S, working in Chennai D/O Ex M.L.A, G.D/O EX M.P, Seeks settled groom CNB. 9489935653

ADIDRAVIDAR, HINDU 23/159, Colour Beautiful , BE , Lives in Chennai. Father is an affluent Businessman with Good Networth.Looking for a Compatible & well Educated Groom.Ct: 9444381207 / 8056201702 / 9176627918

MUDALIAR, 27/160, Fair, Beautiful, B.Tech, Business Family,100.Cr Net Worth, CNB India/Abroad. 7299576644

CASTENOBAR CHETTIAR/ 1977 Nov / MCA/ Fair and Very young Looking Seeks Hindu forward community Contact: dsrea202203@gmail.com, Ph:9790775450

✔ BEAUTIFUL, SLIM, Fair, Tall Iyengar Girl, BE + MBA (IIM), Running her own company. 38yrs. any Brahmin boy, (even if younger age) from elite family only (preferably running family business or a successful business background). She's a student of Bharathanatyam, Mohiniyattam and Kalaripayattu. Interests in arts, music, travel, nature & trekking. Fitness and health conscious. Contact : WhatsApp message at 9342075206 / 9342325727 (no calls please due to the heavy number of incoming calls) or Email: priyanka.gas@gmail.com

ASTASHASRAM, IYER, Revathi, Oct. 1972, B.Sc., Seeks well educated / settled 1st Marriage Iyer Groom only. BHP: sree.lashmi108@gmail.com

ALLIANCE INVITED from professionally qualified Groom well placed within India from upper class family with clean habits for a charming fair Iyengar Vadakalai Girl 27, 150cms, Koundinya, Moolam 4th padam, BTech MBA, Chennai employed belonging to educated / affluent family. Iyengar/ Iyer/ any brahmin acceptable. Age difference 3 years. Horoscope matching optional. Call/ whatsapp: 9843341294 or 9843902242.

USA GROOM WANTED

USA, INTEL EMPLOYED, Vanniyakula Kshatriya, Fair 26/ Anusham, MS from Texas, BE, ECE from CEG, AU. Father industrialist, Chennai. Looking for USA working Groom for their only daughter.
Mail: mahaa.doral@gmail.com
Whatsapp: 98840 71390

MUDALIAR 36yr Makam B.com/MBA Employed. Seeks Employed/Business Grooms below 40yr. Ph: 9940469633

TELUGU

44 Yrs, SC - Madiga Telugu Christian Chennai /diploma/ invtd decent family. Phone - 93908 45532

KAMMA NAIDU, 27/Ht 165cm/MBA,UK, Well Settled Business Family in Chennai. Seeks Groom fm–kamma naidu upper Middle Class Family. Ct:80968 66465

ELITE RICH Kamma Naidu 26/B. Tech.,M.B.A. Own (200 Buses/Omni Bus ServicesAll over India 500 Crs. Family only Daughterseeks Groom. 9087604894

NAIDU, 40/150cm, Uthirattathi, Ph.D., Asst.Prof, 1st Marriage seeks suitable Groom. Sub sect No Bar. 7358166806

URDU

MUSLIM GIRL 33/173 Sr. SWE in UK on work visa. Seeks IT Professionals groom age below 37 and above 173cm willing to relocate. Cont: 9003765355

SUNNI MUSLIM, Girl 24/165 B. Design, Fair, Slim, Working seeks well Educated Groom. 9841106166

MBBS 25 / 175cm, slim, fair, Religious fmly seeks Doctors blw 28yr preferably Chn wlng to migrate USA 9342928472

BRIDES WANTED

BENGALI

BENGALI BOY 33 yrs. Advertising professional. Bangalore. Well–spoken, progressive, liberal. Wants to move abroad , Wanted suitable girl. Preferably in Bangalore. With similar outlook. Father: 94334 98896

COSMOPOLITAN

A Post Graduate Bride from an Educated Family for a Hindu Professional Working for MNC in India, 182cm / 32 yrs. Parents Doctors and Economically sound. Mother Tamil, Father Telugu. Caste no bar Contact: 9840052525.

PROFESSIONAL, PHD, Industry leader, talented, spiritual, supportive. DoB:Mar78. Respected, defence family, Bengaluru. Tel:9845284089

DIVORCEE

DIVORCEE,MUSLIM,Khan,38,Professor Own House. No Father,Mother, Children Wanted Suitable Bride. Call: 9342585072

PROPOSALS INVITED from Parents of bridegroom, 36 yrs, Tall, MD, Ph.D (USA) in Health Policy, Working in USA Divorced due to cultural incompatibility. No issue, from Balija/ Gavara Naidu Graduate brides, of decent, cultured family. Ct: 9790596780

IYER DIVORCEE Boy Vadoolam Thiruvonam 47/168 Director IT MNC Seeks Iyer / Iyengar Graduate Girl Divorcee / Widow without Issues 9841942915.

ENGLISH

Tamil/Vanniyar(CNB)/ Professor, 42/ 170, PhD, Vellore/Seeks Educated Girl/Age-27-36/Call @9791177668.

MALAYALAM

CHRISTIAN PARENTS invite suitable proposals for son living in London, B.E., M.B.A. (U.K.), aged 45, working for a global firm, and also governing successful and growing family businesses in the U.K. and India with initiatives to expand to other countries. Please contact mother at selina@vineyardhills.in.

EZHAVA GROOM Age 28yrs., Star–Aayilayam, UK Citizen BE / MBA Working, Seeks equally Educated & Working girl settled in UK only CNB only Hindus Contact – 9840260398.

BRAHMIN YOUTH 48 yrs / 5'4", Degree, own computer shop. Other caste & divorced also considerable. 9847704391.

IYER BOY Pune, Mid forties, looks younger, Unmarried, PG, MNC now business, good monthly income, own house, seeks bride, educated 35-41 middle class, poor fly, no demands, Divorcee Ok Caste no bar, Employed/ unemployed.9895096272,9975539063

NAIR PARENTS Chennai Own House seeks Educated Girl Employed or Unemployed for son 34/178 Chathayam B.E., MBA. well settled. 9884434362

SUDDHA JADHAGAM Nair 30/167 Makam, Pvt Job, Chennai, under going C.A Inter, Coimbatore settled. Subcaste nobar. Ph: 94434 77653.

SAURASTRA

SAURASTRA 36, Kanni Hastham, Bcom MBA, Manager Chennai Salary 1 Lakh Pm, Suitable Bride Wanted 9381725577

TAMIL

VADHAKALAI SADHAYAM Srivasyam, 46, B.A, Employed, Unmarried. Seek Brahmin girl/Divorcee with no child Okay. Ctn 9444740544.

HINDU AD (PR) Retd. Chief Logistics I/C of BPCL (Retail) SR invite alliance for their son 29 BE, MBA (Symbiois, Pune) Area Sales Manager, MNC Trichy CTC 10L/pa. Employed Girl preferred. 9444901839/ 9344533281

VANNIYAKULA KSHATRIYA– Doctor M.D, D.M., slim fair good looking 41/ 175 own hospital 7 lac \ pm well settled clean habits innocent divorce seeks bride unmarried /divorce fair and slim doctor or any degree from good family below 38– no expectation. Contact 6382218317

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MUDALIYAR, 36, 173cm, Moolam, Ortho Doctor seeks good looking educated affluent bride. Ct 90947 77999.

CASTE NO Bar, 1st Marriage, 1978/ 170 DCE well settled Midunam, Business seeks bride. Ct: 9087865951

HINDU 50YEARS, 163Cm, Own Business, UK Permanent Citizen, Divorce. Seeks Fair, Good Looking Educated Bride with Good Family Background, Cast No Bar. Contact: 9940057666

MUDALIAR 29, BE, MBA, 179cm,24Lacs PA, well Settled Family Seeks Suitable Bride CNB 8778514465/ 7200866346

RICH MUDALIYAR 28/M.B.B.S., ownHospital, own Kalyana Mandapam,Cinema Theatre, Lodges etc., seekingRich bride 7305491610

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KAMMA NAIDU, 26, 178 cms, Doctor. Preparing for higher studies. Lives in Coimbatore. Father is a Doctor, owns a Hospital in Coimbatore. Looking for suitable Doctor match. Contact: 6366448344

VISHWAKARMA, 28, 180 cms, Software Professional, Graduate. Lives in Canada. Father is a Businessman. Family is affluent with a good net worth. Looking for a compatible well educated match from any community. Contact: 6366448345

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SOZHIYA VELLALAR, 23, 160 cms, IT Professional, Graduate. Lives in Boston. Father is a Professional. Well settled family. Looking for a well educated match with PR or a Green Card holder/ Citizen in the USA. Contact: 6366448344

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CATHOLIC MUDALIAR 39, 173cm MBA/ MNC 14Lak PA Chennai, Handsome Seeks Well Qualified Girl Ct: 6379397599

CSI, VELLALAR, BE,MBA,fair,27/170/ 50k p.m seeks suitable bride from working christian girls.CT:93618805 60.mail:titusbsnl@gmail.com

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HINDU KALLAR 1991 born 172cms sw engg 26 lac pa mnc in chennai seeks graduate bride ph–9443065803

SC AD 36/167 M.Tech HR Central Govt. divorcee no encumbrance seeks suitable bride Contact 99525-98743, 9994640670

AGAMUDAYAR 29/176 B.E. 15L /PA Seeks Good Looking Educated Affluent Bride from Good Family Ct: 9790934460

TAMIL

BRIDE WANTED for Doctor, Radiologist, Hindu Pillai BC. 30 tall fair affluent family, BC/MBC. Ct:9865167703

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INTERCASTE PARENTS (F-chettiar M-saiva Mudaliyar) Seeks Suitable Working Girl (Vegetarian) for their son Age 31(B.E)/Uthiram/178cms/Fair/SWE.Contact 9710080772

MUDALIAR (CNB) : 26/ Handsome, MBBS, MS Doing, Having Own Cinema Theatre, Kalyana Mahal, Shopping Mall, Chennai, Only Son, Elite Family, Seeks Bride Eng / Doctor – 7305810258

VANIYA CHETTIAR : 28/175, M.E. CTS, Eng, Chennai, Father Business, Elite Family , Seeks Bride Any Degree.– 9866285839

SAIVA PILLAI34, 170 cms, Fair, Software Engineer (Worked in U.S) Divorced, No Children seeks Suitable Bride Ct: 7550356491

CHENNAI KIND Fair Phd Innoc Divorcee 39yrs GM Sports Rs 2Lac/ Mth. Educ Hindu girl. Ph: 9884171419

MUDALIAR 1985 Chithirai, Fair, B.E , Pvt, Well Settled Chennai Any Degree Emp/ Unemploy. Ct: 9962010118

TAMIL HINDU(BC). MBA, Age – 39. 1st marrige. Good boy & Good fair the most beautiful honest Boy needs a Girl. I have full Consent to be a Groom and a Good Son in the Girls House Family. (CNB). Avoid Brokers. Kannan : 91236 89257

WELL SETTLED Pillai 49Yrs 175cms B.E (Elect) Divorcee Athletic working in MNC seeks suitable graduate life partner in Chennai Ct: 9500083374. Email: asrkumar@gmail.com

HINDU NADAR, 38/185, M.Tech (IIT Madras: Microelectronics & VLSI Design), Principal Design Engineer (Chip Design) in an MNC in Bangalore, Eggetarian, Star: Kattai, seeks well educated, suitable bride (30–34 yrs). Caste No Bar. Ct: 9840117920.

HINDU REDDY 32/173 B.E., SWE Divorcee 20Lac pa CNB seeks suitable bride. CT:98943-87918, 94421-72774.

HINDU YADAV, 31/159cm, BE, MBA / IT Company / Rs.60,000/- PM. Seeks BE or Working Bride. Ct : 78717 66000

BITS PILANI 6'1' Engineer Mudaliar Boy born in Nov 91, Wkg in Corporate at Bangalore Salary 35-40 lacs seeks Engineer/Doctor 5 4' Ct: 7382620365.

HINDU AD PR 31/175, B.Tech NIT Trichy, MBA IIM Bangalore, MNC-35L per annum. Seeks Bride. 9442181645.

TAMIL VISWAKARMA 39/170 fair Thiruvonam Rich/ CA/ MNC/ 70,000 Seeks Same Caste Bride 9486320982

HINDU, 38/ 162 cm. Journalist. 50,000 p.m. first Marriage. Own house in Chennai. Seeks suitable Bride from BC, MBC. Divorcee or young widow without Child. Phone: 93613 65640

MUDALIAR 29 165cm BE Avittam Govt job Australia seeks well educated slim bride . Ct Geetham 9884858014

MBBS, MS (Gen Surgery) 1.5Lakh/PM, Age 30, Well Settled. Only one Son. Need: Dr, BE, Any PG Ct: 8248257396

RICH ARCOT Mudaliyar 28/ B.E.,Own (300 Buses), Wind Mills etc.,Seeks Rich Family Bride 7305491610

SAIVA PILLAI 34, 5ft 8inch, fair and handsome, BE (Telecom), Officer Indian Army Tech Branch, 20 lacs PA, son of retd army officer looking for affable and well educated girl. Equal and sub caste no bar. 9448307862.

VISWAKARMA (G.S) Uthiradam 42/ 168, Bachelor, Doctor, Principal in Pvt Medical college, Bangalore seeks suitable bride. Ct: 9480611093, 7349544114, 9448655053.

TAMIL

NAIDU 31/164cm ME Asst. Professor Chennai-Divorcee seeks suitable Bride Unmarried/ Divorcee - no issue- Naidu/ Mudaliar/ pillai/ Reddiyar/ Chettiar pref. Contact : 94456 89306 / 94430 52596.

BRAHMIN 32/182cm BE, MBA MNC HR. professional 8Lacs PA. seeks suitable Brahmin Educated bride. contact: 7667724406/g.nishanth85@gmail.com

SAIVA MUDALIYAR Well Settled 41/ 165 M.Tech employed divorce seeks bride below 38 yrs. Contact: 7824940197

INTERCASTE PARENTS Krithigai 27/ 178 B.Sc MBA US Voice Sr. AR seeks suitable bride Caste nobar 9840388489

Naidu 39 Yrs. Software Eng 6 Lacs Divorce Looking for Bride 9965309141.

1984 AUG Born 188Cms, Advocate (Bank & Co.,) seeks Educated & Good Looking Bride Veg Only Ct: 9841298539

MUDALIAR 29/170,HANDSOME, SWE, MNC, USA,150000. USD.PA, Business Family,100.Cr Net Worth, CNB. 7299576644

SC AD 29/B.E [EEE] Govt.Job [Canara Bank – Asst. Manager] 75,000p. m. Seeks Bride Ph.& Whatsapp:7397674481

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HARITHAM, REVATHI 1986/175cms B.tech(IT), PG Diploma in digital effects, lecturer Cochin. Any Brahmin, divorcee with or without child, educated employed. atulya1965@gmail.com

SEEKING BRAHMIN Bride willing to be Homemaker for our Son, MS (CS) USA, 27yrs/176 cms, Brahmin, Koundinyam, Vegetarian, No Smoking, No Drinking. Rich or Poor Family does not matter.Ct: Whatsapp: +1 732 372 8410

IYER SANKRITHI Bharani 49/175 very fair Handsome MBA, Phd., widower with 7yrs son,seeks a Graduate/PG homemaker Bride.Divorcee/Widow excuse. Subsect of Iyer/Iyengar No Bar. 9840323947/chandrag2000@yahoo.com

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IYER BRAHACHARANAM Moolam Netrakashyapam Nov1973 Diplm working at PVT ORG 4L PA Seeks Any Girl 9840023524

ASST.VICEPRESIDENT-USA-GreenCard IYER 39 Vadhulam Pooradam 4, vegetarian non-smoker teetotaler divorced; seeks girl from Iyer/Iyengar community. Ph: +919080658946 Email: ar.matrimony@msgcoe.info

ASTASHASRAM KARTHIGAI 53 MBA M.S, well settled Seeks educated 1st Marriage any Iyer brides only. BHP: sree.lashmi108@gmail.com

NEVER MARRIED Iyer Brahmin, Kerala, 41 yrs, Kerala government service, seeks unmarried Brahmin bride 32–36 yrs 9400442475

SC Arunthathiyar 29/180 cm M.Sc M.Phil Clinical Psychology working in Pvt Hospital, Cbe Rs.50K pm Own House, Seeks suitable educated Bride (Divorce Excuse) Ct: 9486100717.

TAMIL

TAMIL IYER Vadma Bachelor 58Yrs Good Habit Healthy Chennai Elec. 40K 5ks blw 48Yrs Open Minded & without any Expectation Pure Veg & Middle class Orthodox Fmly Widow, Slight P/H Welcome Ct: 9840846524

NATTUKKOTTAI CHETTIAR 37yrs IT Mgr.(computer) Rs.12 Lakhs PA seeks Bride.CNB. 9884688588 / 8754548204

IYER, 41 Years, Self employed Chartered Accountant earns 25lakhs per year. Right leg slightly short. He can walk and drive vehicle normally. Need Suitable Bride. Call 9994934568

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TELUGU

39 Yrs, SC - Madiga Telugu Christian Chennai based Working in USA / Family Invtd Smart wkg life partner. Phone: 93908 45532

NAIDU, 27/180CM, BTech, MS, Poorattadhi , Working as Research Engineer in Sweden. Contact 9566682220

NAIDU KAMMA 38yrs well settled Businessman Earning Rental + other Income around 4.5L PM Caste No Bar, Divorcee. richguychennai@gmail.com

Arya Vysya Kota Sundeep B.Tech (HONS) M.S (USA) SR.Prod Lead, Google, USA Rem: 500k, Birth May-1989 Ht 6' Whitish Gothram Srilakula Required a Bright & Beautiful Arya Vysya Girl 5'4' Willing to stay at USA send details With Name, Dob:Tob:Pob to Wattsup: 9848097375/9949077375 With Latest Photograph.

KAPU BOY, 6 feet 1 inch 28, B.Tech from IIT Kanpur,Group A gazetted officer in Govt of India seeks suitable alliance from Telugu/ Tamil speaking family. Contact: +91 8928575214

GAVARA NAIDU Hastham 28 Slim BE 16 LPA Seeks Qualified Employed Goodlooking Girl from Middle Class. 9443620099 & 9442480922

NAIDU, GAVARA – 27/178, Engineer, from an educated family. Seeking for a good looking and broad minded girl either in India or abroad Contact : 9500812800

KAMMA NAIDU, 31/183cm, fair, Star Pooram, Rasi Simham, Prop. Manufacturing Unit with Engineering background at Chennai. Seeks bride from Kamma Naidu, Upper Middle Class Family. Ct: 9840786456

Balija Naidu Fair 30/5'6" MS SWE Wrkg in Dallas USA. Seeks MS Qlfd Bride Wrkg in USA. Sub Caste no bar Ct:9945510556/ nknidhi50@gmail.com

KAMMA NAIDU, B.E., MS. working in U.S born on 1988, Handsome seeks suitable Fair, Good Looking Girl, reputed family aged betwn 25-29yrs Subsect no bar. 9994915471/9840214580

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Urdu Muslim, Good looking, Fair, 27Y, 172/60, BE.,MBA, Associate Consultant, working in MNC seeks Well educated, Gd looking, Fair & Religious Bride from Tamil Nadu. Contact: 9843574225, showhath@gmail.com

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Members brainstorm ideas to empower ward committees

SoPs, clear escalation process for ward committees among key demands

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

Months before the city goes for civic polls, over 250 ward committee members spread over 100 wards convened to brainstorm ideas to empower ward committees and make them more effective, at the Bruhat Bengaluru Ward Samiti Samavesha, organised by Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy in the city on Saturday.

A survey conducted among ward committee members revealed that the lack of Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) to conduct meetings was the biggest problem plaguing committee meetings.

Participants at the Bruhat Bengaluru Ward Samiti Samavesha in Bengaluru on Saturday. • SUDHAKARA JAIN

Wide publicity

The conclave resolved demanding the chief civic commissioner to issue clear guidelines on when and how to conduct the meetings. Communication of date, venue, and time of the meeting continues to be a problem. Many members demanded wide publicity has to be given and some suggested announcing the same through public addressal systems on garbage collection vehicles.

Several members also said that ward committee members have no usable data to facilitate informed decision making.

Another issue that many members raised was that there was no mechanism to hold anyone accountable for the implementation of decisions taken by the committee and there was no escalation mechanism in place for follow-up action. The convention demanded that the chief commissioner make zonal commissioners responsible for the follow-up actions.

Since after the civic polls, ward committees will be reconstituted along with the new council, the convention demanded that the civic body draft a new process for selection of ward committee members and publish it for public review. The new process must enable transparency in ward committee member selection and the roles and responsibilities of committee members well defined.

While most ward committee meetings have turned into grievance redressal meetings, the convention demanded that committees must be empowered to decide on budgeting for the ward in the coming years. It suggested the meetings in November and December should be dedicated to discussing budgeting and these inputs should be collated at the city level for the civic budget.

Pressure group

"The convention that met on Saturday will organise itself as Bruhat Bengaluru Ward Samiti Balaga, which will act as a pressure group to empower ward committees. The suggestions and resolutions that have come up at the Samavesha will be submitted to the civic administration for further action," said Srinivas Alavilli, chief, civic participation, Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy.

AAP to launch door-to-door campaign

Party holds meeting to chalk out plans to face upcoming elections to BBMP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

After an electoral triumph in the Punjab Assembly elections, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is getting ready to face forthcoming elections to Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP). The party has said it is reaching voters through the 'door-to-door Kejriwal model' campaign.

On Saturday, the party held an executive committee meeting to chalk out plans to face the elections.

In a press conference, party State president Prithvi Reddy said: "In the city, only AAP can give corruption-free administration and permanent solutions to problems faced by the citizens. The party will give higher quality services required for Bengaluru pertaining to education, road infrastructure, sanitary and others. These promises cannot be delivered by the BJP, the party that charges 40% commission and loots people."

Former IPS officer Bhaskar Rao, who recently joined the party, said: "The elections to the BBMP must have been held in 2020. In the absence of councillors, the State government and local MLAs have resorted to irregularities in the administration of the civic body. We are hopeful of AAP coming to power and providing good administration."

'Facing cases'

District president Mohan Dasari said the party has been fighting for the rights of the citizens and faced the wrath of those in power. He said that many party workers are facing cases for being vocal about the welfare of the State.

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POTHOLES

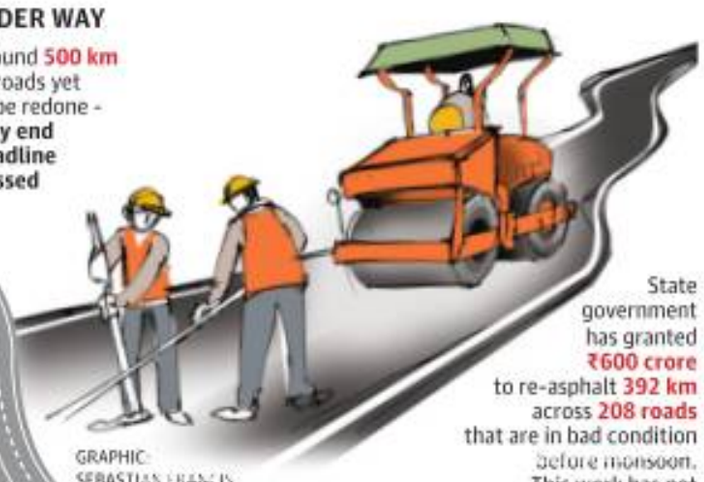
Of the identified potholes, **282** stretches need long-term solutions

5,500 potholes are being filled in the next 10 days

ROADWORKS UNDER WAY

Redoing of roads dug up for laying utilities in 110 villages **794.98 km**

Around **500 km** of roads yet to be redone - **May end deadline missed**



GRAPHIC: SEBASTIAN FRANCIS.

State government has granted **₹600 crore** to re-asphalt **392 km** across **208 roads** that are in bad condition before monsoon. This work has not started yet.

Monsoon results in flooded roads, snarled-up traffic and power outage. With many infra projects still under way, citizens are wary of what's in store when the rains arrive.

Is Bengaluru monsoon-ready?

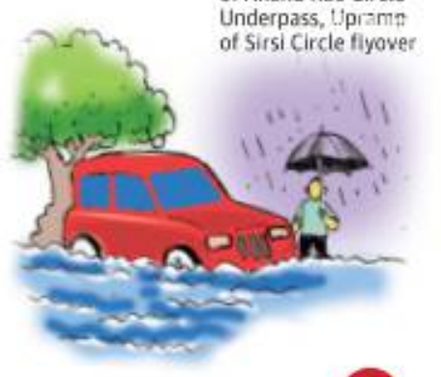
A view of Horamavu that got flooded in the recent heavy rains. • FILE PHOTO

FLOODING

In Central Business District 24

Prominent points that see waterlogging 59

Coffee Board Junction, Le Meridien Underpass, Nehru Circle, New BEL Road, Lalbagh Main Gate, BMTC K.H. Road, K.R. Circle, Mayo Hall, Garuda Mall, Ejipura, Srinivagilu, Khoday's Junction, Binny Mill Underpass, Downramp of Anand Rao Circle Underpass, Upramp of Sirsi Circle flyover



Outside Central Business District 35

NGEF, Pottery Road, Silk Board, Roopena Agrahara, Jayadeva Underpass, Begur Main Road, Gottigere, Loyola Junction, Meenakshi Mall, Veerasandra, Agara, Muthu Mariyamma Temple, Ramamurthy Nagar Main Road, Iblur, Marathahalli Bridge, Gali Anjaneya Temple, Jnanabharathi, Attiguppe, West of Chord Road, Puttenahalli Underpass, Kogilu Cross

Source: Bengaluru City Traffic Police

BBMP Action: The civic body has called for tender to install vertical box sections at these points for the water to drain out. Last day of tenders **May 27**

Likely to be completed in 15 days

STORM-WATER DRAINS

Total length of storm-water drains 840 km

Number of flood-prone areas **209**

Hyper-sensitive/ highly vulnerable **58**

Sensitive/ vulnerable **151**

BBMP has ongoing desilting and cleaning tenders only for the **428 km** long remodelled drains

But flooding is observed mostly in drains that have not been remodelled

BBMP floated tenders this week for desilting of drains that have not been remodelled, tenders to be finalised in a week and work set to be completed in the next 30 days

Will electricity play hide and seek?

Better transformers, underground cables will cut power outage: Bescom

JAHNAVI T.R.
BENGALURU

One drop of rain and there goes the power – a commonly heard grouse from citizens every time it rains. Having faced extensive damage to its own infrastructure, which also meant hours without electricity for its consumers, the Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (Bescom) is banking on its latest transformer maintenance campaign to reduce these interruptions.

"During the campaign, we took care of replacement of lead wires, jumping and tapping up of oil to distribution transformers centers (ODTCs). We also monitored the condition of earthing and cleaned the debris and disposed the waste dumped by public near transformer units," said S.R. Nagaraj, General Manager, Consumer Relations, Bescom. He added that 432 Special Design Transformers (SDTs) have been installed in the city this year, which will also make footpaths safe for pedestrian movements.

Bescom workers removing faulty electric cables and fixing insulated cables in Bengaluru. • FILE PHOTO

Officials say rainfall is not a problem for Bescom, but when it is accompanied by gusty winds, huge trees fall down on the electric poles, which ultimately leads to power outage. "This year, we saw winds like never before which is why so many trees fell down. This is why our teams have now taken up trimming of trees before monsoon arrives," added an official.

The four-phase conversion of overhead cables into underground cables or aerial bundled cables is expected to ensure that even when there are gusty winds, power supply will not be interrupted. So far, 83.43% of high tension wires and 70.42% of low tension wires have been converted into underground and aerial bundled cables under four phases, data provided by Bescom showed.

"In the first two phases, around 90% of work is already complete. We just have to finish the termination which could not be done as it was the exam season. The completion of the project might take four to five months. But once completed at areas where most work is already done, there will not be power cuts", the officer explained. At places where there are no underground or aerial bundled wires, the officials say that the monsoon teams are immediately attending to defects and taking up all the routine maintenance work.

Steps to avoid electrical accidents

Electrical accidents, sometimes fatal, have been frequently reported in recent months. A Bescom official said teams have become more vigilant in removing hanging cables on roads and trees. Bescom is also conducting awareness programmes in schools while also putting up educative boards at public transport stations.

Most road projects to miss deadline ahead of monsoon

Civic body is working on issuing new tenders to desilt drains only now

K.V. ADITYA BHARADWAJ
BENGALURU

If the havoc caused by the recent high-intensity pre-monsoon showers are an indication of how the city's infrastructure would stand against the monsoon rains, Bengalureans are bracing for the worse.

The civic body is working on issuing new tenders to desilt storm-water drains (SWDs) and do extensive roadworks only now, even as the monsoon is expected to set in early this year.

Chief Civic Commissioner Tushar Giri Nath said that during the recent city rounds, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, who also holds charge of the city, observed that most of the desilting of drains were happening in the lined drains and not in the non-lined drains, which has caused a lot of flooding due to heavy silting and backflow.

"The Chief Minister instructed us to immediately take up desilting of these non-lined drains. We have called for a short-term tender, which will be finalised in a week, and the work completed over the next one month. We have divided the work into several packages, and will start them simultaneously to ensure that the works are on track. In the ongoing works in the lined drains, we will speed up the work," he said.

WIDE ANGLE

But the timing of the work has drawn the ire of civic activists. "What we don't understand is as to why the civic body doesn't learn from the previous monsoons and start preparing early? It is such a joke that the civic body is tendering desilting SWDs now, days ahead of the monsoon," said D. S. Rajashekhar of Bengaluru Praja Vedike.

Over 10,000 potholes mapped

The recent rains also brought more misery to the city's roads. The civic body recently mapped 10,282 potholes using the FixMyStreet app and have begun work on filling them. "We are already in the process of tackling 5,500 potholes, and we are confident of filling all the identified potholes in the next 10 days," said Mr. Giri Nath. "We are working on a war footing to fill all the potholes in the city, using all modes and resources available, including Python," he added.

Meanwhile, Bengaluru City Traffic Police have listed 59 spots across the city that regularly see waterlogging. "We asked the traffic police on the ground to geotag all locations that see flooding and cause traffic issues, based on which we have submitted the list to BBMP," said Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic) B.R. Ravikanthe Gowda.

B.S. Prahlad, Chief Engineer, Road Infrastructure, said the civic body had called tenders and Friday was the last day to submit bids to install vertical box sections at these points for the water to drain out of the roads. The work will be completed soon, he said.

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike is also redoing the roads in 110 villages – 794.98 km dug up to lay utilities like underground drainage and water pipelines. "At a recent review meeting, the previous commissioner set a May-end deadline for the work. However, due to heavy rains, work has been going on at a very slow pace and it is unlikely that the works will be completed before the monsoon," a senior civic official conceded, signalling that the 110 villages are going to spend this monsoon too with bad roads and ongoing civic works. The BBMP has announced that it will take up re-asphalting of 392 km of roads across 208 roads that are in a bad condition at a cost of ₹600 crore. This work has not even begun on the ground yet, which also means commuters will probably have to put up with bad roads this monsoon too.

RWH: Not many in city reusing water for domestic purposes

While 87% respondents in a survey said they did rainwater harvesting, only 6% stated they used the water for consumption

JAHNAVI T.R.
BENGALURU

The countdown to the southwest monsoon has begun, but it may well be another year of the city letting precious rainwater down the drain. While over two lakh properties in the city have made provisions for rainwater harvesting (RWH), only 60% of them are reusing the water for domestic purposes. The lack of space within properties and awareness are identified by the officials as the main reasons for this gap.

Last year, it was made compulsory for 30 x 40 sites also to have RWH systems. Prior to this, the rule applied to properties which had 60 x 40 or larger dimensions. "Before providing water and underground drain (UGD) connections to new properties, we check if provisions are made for RWH. But the problem is, the water collected is being connected to the toilets instead of being reused or recharged. Ultimately, this water ends up in BWSSB's network", said N. Jayaram, Chairman, Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB).

A percolation pit constructed for recharging groundwater at a residential apartment in Bengaluru. • FILE PHOTO

A recent report released by the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) based on the research done by Environment Management and Policy Research Institute (EMPRI), showed that 87% of the respondents from the city had adopted rainwater harvesting in their buildings.

While 56% of them said they use it for secondary purposes like gardening and flushing, only 6% respondents used the harvested water for consumption. "This shows that there was very less awareness among the residents about the usage of water for consumption or about its potability", the researchers said. The report also said 89% of respondents reused the treated wastewater from sewage treatment plants for gardening and flushing purposes.

Water conservation expert S. Vishwanath was more optimistic. "The NITI Aayog had said that we would run out of groundwater in 2020 only. But last year, as it rained for a long time, we did not see any major water shortage complaints being reported as many people in the city have actively taken up rainwater collection and they are also doing a good job of recycling it," he said.

Satya Prakash Varanashi, an architect who has been promoting rainwater harvesting for 20 years at residences and also practices the same at his house, says that space is not at all an issue when it comes to collection. "Rainwater sumps can be constructed under the house, under any room. If the owner, designer, engineers and builders come together to harvest rain water, then they can surely figure out ways to do it".

Need for civic responsibility

The closure of open drain with concrete slabs is also proving to be problematic for the BWSSB whenever it rains as the rainwater also joins the BWSSB's network of flow.

The officials say this results in rainwater getting accumulated on the roads, which further leads to people opening the manholes.

"Without thinking about the consequences, some people open manholes to avoid water entering into their houses. Before this year's monsoon, we are educating people to stop making this mistake. Civic responsibility is the need of the hour", Mr. Jayaram added.

Along with education and awareness programmes, BWSSB officials said they have taken up the desilting of its UGD network (main and lateral lines) to ensure there is no obstruction of flow during rainy season.

Timings
BENGALURU

SUNDAY, MAY. 29	
RISE 05:53	SET 18:42
RISE 04:51	SET 17:51
MONDAY, MAY. 30	
RISE 05:53	SET 18:42
RISE 05:34	SET 18:42
TUESDAY, MAY. 31	
RISE 05:53	SET 18:42
RISE 06:18	SET 19:34

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	32	25
Mysuru	33	22
Bengaluru	31	21

Bengaluru Today
32°C The weather will be little warm but humid. Night will be pleasant. Spell of light rain and thundershower is likely.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
31°C A slight warm but humid weaher to prevail. Night will be comfortable.Chances of rain and thundershower.

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HC sets deadline for completion of probe in various offences

Court says it should be 60 days for petty offences and 90 days for heinous ones

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

In an unprecedented order, the High Court of Karnataka has fixed a time frame of 60 days and 90 days, respectively, for completion of investigation in petty offences and the serious/heinous offences by the police and other investigating agencies in the State.

However, the High Court said that the trial courts could extend the period on request made by the police by assigning reasons for extension of time for completing the investigation.

Guidelines for speedy investigation

- Magistrate should play a role to counter moves of persons in influential positions to subvert effective process of investigation
- Investigating officers should bring to the notice of the magistrate bottlenecks hindering the probe
- Magistrates should send report to the district judge for appropriate action on administrative side to eliminate delays
- Superior police officers to take over the investigation in case of delay in probe by the investigating officer for unjustifiable reasons
- Necessary mechanism to be devised to monitor progress of investigation by senior officers as per the provisions of the Karnataka Police Manual

DA case

The High Court issued the direction while laying down elaborative guidelines for speedy investigation after taking serious note of non-completion of investigation by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) in a case filed against Belagavi South MLA Abhaykumar Patil in 2012 for allegedly possessing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income.

Also, the High Court directed the special court and the investigating agency to adhere to the mandate of the witness protection scheme laid down by the apex court as the complainant, Sujit, had written to the Chief Justice of the High Court in 2019, alleging that he was being threatened and pressurised by the henchmen of the MLA to withdraw the complaint.

Justice S. Sunil Dutt Yadav issued the guidelines in the interim order passed on May 17 on the two petitions, one filed by Mr. Patil questioning the 2017 order passed by a special court for registration of an FIR and conducting investigation against him, and another by Mr. Sujit seeking direction to the ACB to complete probe and submit the final report.

The High Court issued the guidelines after hearing senior advocate Sandesh Chouta, who was appointed as *amicus curiae*, on the issues that are hindering speedy probe and remedial measures required to be taken by the government, the courts and the police.

In case of failure to complete investigation in an expeditious manner, provisions under the Karnataka Police Act could be invoked and a complaint could be made to the State and District Police Complaint Authority, the court said. In fact, delay in completing investigation could be considered as "serious misconduct" by the authority in terms of Section 20(C)(7) of the Karnataka Police Act, the High Court said while pointing out that this measure would ensure accountability of the investigating officers.

Bifurcation of police

The High Court said that necessary efforts for bifurcation of law and order, and crime investigation as regards personnel needed to be implemented to bring in professionalism in investigation, and a separate investigation wing with dedicated personnel in police stations had to be imparted necessary knowledge and training relating to technology involved in commission of cyber crimes, money laundering and corruption offences.

The High Court also suggested that State authorities may consider having provisions for speedy and effective investigation by framing regulations in line with the Police Regulations Bengal, 1943.

Dairying that saved farmers during crisis loses its sheen

The sector has become almost non-remunerative

B.S. SATISH KUMAR
BENGALURU

Milk cans kept outside Kapanigowdanadoddi village dairy cooperative society near Kanakapura in Ramanagaram district. •K. MURALI KUMAR

Dairying, which provided financial succour to farming families in Karnataka when it was gripped by severe agrarian crisis, appears to have lost its sheen in the last two years. The sector has become almost non-remunerative due to the double impact of escalation in cost of inputs on the one hand and reduction in procurement prices of milk on the other.

Thousands of youth from different walks of life, who returned to their native villages after losing jobs during COVID-19, had taken to dairying to rebuild their lives. What attracted them to it was the organised marketing structure provided through co-operative network by Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) that has milk procurement units in almost all the major villages.

Good system at work

The transparent accounting system and mechanism of fortnightly payment through bank transfer made it a very reliable option. The remunerative procurement price of ₹29 a litre in addition to an incentive of ₹5 a litre added to its attraction. But things have changed drastically as the cost of cattle feed, and cultivation cost of fodder have increased while the procurement prices of milk have been slashed.

Trying to improve the situation, the authorities have increased the procurement price by ₹2.5 a litre after slashing them by ₹5 a litre about a year ago. While it is not clear whether the earlier procurement prices will be eventually restored, dairy farmers feel that just restoring the earlier price level alone will not help given the skyrocketing input costs.

A farmer rearing cow, especially high-yielding hybrid cows, will have to provide not just fodder, but also feed supplements that include balanced nutritional diet. But the cost of these supplements have increased by about 10% to 30% in the last two years. The cultivation cost of fodder too has increased sharply due to the increase in input costs as well as land tilling charges on account of escalation in fuel costs.

INFLATION IMPACT

Nagaraju, a farmer from Ramanagaram district who is into dairying for the last 25 years, says dairying was never under such a price distress earlier. "The cost of a tractor load of hay has almost touched ₹15,000 from ₹6,000 about two years ago. In contrast, milk procurement prices have gone down compared with the situation two years ago," he says.

The secretary of a co-operative milk dairy from Ramanagaram district, who chose anonymity, says several youth have either stopped or reduced the size of their dairy owing to escalation in procurement costs.

On their part, the milk co-operatives are struggling to market the milk as there is a quantum jump in procurement. In fact, the milk procurement by the KMF has reached an all-time high of 91.07 lakh kg a day recently.

The dairy science experts observe that the only way to bail out dairy farmers from the present mess is to take up value addition to milk being sold by KMF so that it is possible to earn more profits. Also, the KMF should expand it's coverage of niche markets particularly, Bengaluru market where it still has potential to grow, they say.

Meanwhile, agricultural experts caution that neglecting of dairy sector in a state like Karnataka, which stands next only to Rajasthan in terms of drought-prone land, could spell disaster for agrarian economy. They point out that if there was one sector that supported farmers and reduced the number of suicides during the earlier drought, it was dairying backed by the KMF. There is a dire need to strengthen KMF and make it a strong business entity, they argue.

No protection to farmer

It is ironical that though the Sate government has enforced the anti-cow slaughter legislation to protect cows, the legislation does not have any support for farmers who take care of cows, they say.

Booksbyweight exhibition to conclude today

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

The last day of Booksbyweight exhibition which begin on May 26 will be held on May 29 between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m., at Safina Plaza, Ground Floor, Infantry Road, according to a release.

Maiden train from new terminal to leave on June 6

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Maiden train service from Sir M. Visvesvaraya Terminal at Baiyappanahalli will leave at 7 p.m. on June 6. The train number 12684 (Banaswadi-Ernakulam-tri-weekly express) will originate from the terminal instead of Banaswadi on the first day of commencing commercial operations.

In the first phase of introducing train services from Sir M. Visvesvaraya Terminal, the South Western Railway (SWR) has decided to shift three pairs of train services from Banaswadi to the new terminal.

In the return direction, train number 12683 (Ernakulam-Banaswadi), with effect from June 8, will terminate at Sir M. Visvesvaraya Terminal instead of Banaswadi.

In a press release, SWR said train number 16320 Banaswadi to Kochuveli-biweekly will originate from the new terminal with effect from June 10. In the return direction, train number 16319 (Kochuveli-Banaswadi) will terminate at Sir M. Visvesvaraya Terminal on June 11.

The third train which will be shifted from Banaswadi to Baiyappanahalli terminal is train number 22354 (Banaswadi to Patna weekly express). This train will originate from the new terminal with effect from June 12. In the return direction, train number 22353 will terminate at the terminal with effect from June 16.

Chief PRO of the SWR Aneesh Hegde said in a phased manner, SWR will introduce more trains from the new point. The SWR has been maintaining that the commercial operations from the new terminal will help in decongesting traffic at KSR Bengaluru and Yeshwantpur stations.

The official said:, "In the backdrop of starting commercial operations from Baiyappanahalli, the messages have been sent to the mobile of people who have already booked tickets.

On Saturday, officials of the SWR and Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) did a spot inspection to operate feeder service to the terminal. An official of the BMTC said that a decision will be taken on the providing feeder services in the next week. The SWR has also requested the BMTC to operate feeder service from Banaswadi Railway Station to the Terminal on the first day of operating commercial services.

General public have been waiting for over a year to use the station. Due to the road network, pandemic and other reasons, it was not opened.

Mangaluru girl comes 2nd in bike rally

TANIA ANNY
BENGALURU

The second round of the MRF MoGrip FMSCI National Rally Championship 2W 2022 was held in Mangaluru recently.

There were 70 participants in different categories like Superbike expert group, Supersport 130 Group B, Supersport 260, Ladies Class, S0 to S3 Scooter 210cc, etc. for both males and females.

Apoorva B., 25, from Mangaluru came second in Ladies' Class in the 1st and 2nd rounds. Fazeela from Ernakulam came first in the 2nd round, and Aishwariya Pisay came first in 1st round held in Chikkamagaluru.

'Left job'

Ms. Apoorva says, "We live in a country where people only know about cricket. Very few people have an idea about motorsports. I started my journey with the Indian National Rally Championship in 2021, but did not get much time to prepare for it. I missed round six as it was in Nashik, and I didn't have any monetary sponsors. But this year, I left my job and made up my mind to work hard for three months and here I came second for INRC Round-1 and Round-2 as well."

54 cycles worth ₹6 lakh recovered; one held

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The Sudduguntepalya police on Saturday arrested a 48-year-old habitual offender and recovered 54 bicycles worth ₹6 lakh from him.

The accused identified as Balaraj is a habitual offender involved in several housebreak thefts earlier and had recently taken to stealing only bicycles.

Srinath Mahadev Joshi, DCP, southeast division, said Balraj was arrested based on a complaint of cycle theft registered on May 9. The complainant's son had parked his bicycle inside the compound and left for home when the accused escaped with it.

Based on the complaint, a team led by Inspector Maruthi G. Nayak, verified CCTV footage and arrested him.

The police recovered 54 bicycles stolen by him, some priced at ₹60,000, and sold to his contacts for ₹3,000 to ₹4,000, Mr. Joshi said.

With his arrest, the police so far solved 10 bicycle theft cases reported in Madiwala and Sudduguntepalya police station limits. However, the police are further investigating to trace the owners of the bicycles.

Mood sombre after RCB crashes out of IPL again

'Ee sala cup namde' hopes have been belied for 15 years; Rajasthan's march to easy win leaves fans upset

ASHWIN ACHAL
AHMEDABAD

For Royal Challengers Bangalore fans, hope springs eternal. Fifteen Indian Premier League (IPL) seasons have come and gone, but they believe that the barren run will come to an end next year, with the slogan *"ee sala cup namde"* (This time the cup is ours).

On Friday too, expectations were high when RCB entered the Qualifier 2 at Ahmedabad, but Rajasthan Royals shut the side out of the tournament with a comprehensive seven-wicket victory. With this, RCB's long wait for a maiden IPL trophy continues. "Some things never change, like the love and support we have for you. It was a memorable season, lots of ups and downs but we stuck together. Thanks for all the entertainment. Hope we can carry the good spirit next year and some players can find their lost form. We love you," Agni, a fan, tweeted.

After the loss to Rajasthan, social media was abuzz with memes and jokes at the expense of RCB. •FILE PHOTO

However, after the loss to Rajasthan, social media was abuzz with memes and jokes at the expense of RCB.

The team, which has finished as runner-up on three occasions (2009, 2011, and 2016), once again fell flat on the big occasion on Friday. Captain Faf du Plessis and his men had tremendous support from the big crowd at the Narendra Modi Stadium, but as Rajasthan marched to an easy win, disappointed fans started to exit the stadium. The scene was sombre outside the venue as well, with those in the red and black RCB jerseys wearing long faces.

The defeat stung more given that it was a Bengaluru lad who was instrumental to RCB's downfall. Rajasthan fast bowler Prasidh Krishna, an alumnus of Jain University and Carmel School, broke RCB's back with three wickets. Only a few years ago, Prasidh started his IPL journey as a net bowler for RCB.

RCB's entry to the playoff rounds itself was fortuitous. It was Delhi Capitals which was favourite to grab the last available playoff spot, until an inexplicable meltdown against Mumbai Indians in their final group stage match allowed RCB to make the cut.

RCB bid a sheepish goodbye. "Goodbyes are hard! Especially after a tough loss when the team truly believed they're good enough to go the distance...," they tweeted.

FROM PAGE ONE

Excess fare: Over 90 cases filed against taxi drivers

Ashok, a taxi driver said, "It is wrong that the department is making drivers responsible. Drivers have no control over fixing of taxi fare, and they collect the fare shown on the mobile at the end of the trip. Some drivers have also said that department officials have impounded vehicles."

As per the government notification on fares for aggregators, for 'D' category vehicles (costing below ₹5 lakh), basic fare is ₹75 for the first 4 km, and ₹18 to ₹36 for every subsequent kilometre.

For "C" category vehicles (costing from ₹5 lakh to ₹10 lakh), it's ₹100 for the first 4 km, and ₹21 to ₹42 for every subsequent kilometre. For 'B' category vehicles (costing from ₹10 lakh to₹ 16 lakh), ₹120 is the fare for the first 4 km, and ₹24 to ₹48 for each kilometre thereafter.

For 'A' category vehicles (costing above ₹16 lakh), ₹150 is the basic fare, and ₹27 to ₹54 for every subsequent kilometre.

The aggregators have to fix fares within the range of minimum and maximum fare. The State government had also allowed the aggregators to collect GST and toll from the passengers. No fare can be fixed based on time taken to complete the trip. There is no waiting charge for the first 20 minutes, thereafter, ₹10 can be charged for every 15 minutes.

THE HINDU
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NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY
ई–निविदा सूचना
सिगनल एवं दूरसंचार विभाग (निर्माण)
ई निविदा संख्या S&T/102/R
भारत संघ के राष्ट्रपति एवं उनकी ओर से उप मुख्य सिगनल एवं दूरसंचार विभाग (निर्माण–II), उत्तर पश्चिम रेलवे, जयपुर निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु निर्धारित प्रपत्र पर खुली ई निविदा (Double Packet) आमंत्रित करते हैं
: कार्य का नाम : Alteration/Addition and Modification in existing EI & PI stations for provision of Double Distant Signalling which includes execution of indoor and outdoor work, excavation of trench, laying of cables, casting of foundations of MACLS Signal and Apparatus cases, erection/ installation of MACLS signals and Apparatus cases, fixing and wiring, testing of relays and gears which also includes designing of circuits. Panel/VDU diagrams with desired alteration as centralized operation of signals as per RE standard in Jaipur-Madar Section on Jaipur Division of NWR कार्य की अनुमानित लागत : रूपये 14,01,44,004.19/– बयाना राशि जमा कराने हेतु : रूपये : 8,50,700/– **Date of Opening of E-tender will be 20.06.2022.** Website particulars and notice board location were completed by this office. The eligibility criteria for the tender are mentioned on the tender document which can be downloaded **w.e.f. 27.05.2022** from the website **"http://www.ireps.gov.in"**
361-CG/22
Follow us on : NWRailways NWRailways

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
E-Tender Notice No.: H/C.79/Catg stalls/ Static unit/GNU/SMU/3rd entry SSS/UBL/22
Dated : 25-05-2022
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following work.

Name of the Work	Approx. Value
Catering 07 units for grant of License for Operation and Management of Catering stalls at Hubballi Railway Station.	Rs. 48,44,280/-

Last date for submission of bids: **Upto 12:00 Hrs. on 17-06-2022**
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Senior Divisional Commercial Manager
PUB/TI/KA/SR/PR/SWR/2022-23 **Hubballi**
S.W.Railways SWRRLY SWRRLY

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
E-Tender Notice Bid No.: GEM/2022/B/2176869
Dated : 24-05-2022
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following work.

Name of the Work	Approx. Value
Bengaluru Division - The proposal for outsourcing the work Non Core maintenance activities of wagons during ROH at Wagon Depot SGT of Bengaluru Division for a period of two years.	Rs. 81,76,847.01

Last date for submission of bids: **Upto 17:00 Hrs. on 14-06-2022**
For details log on: https://gem.gov.in
Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer
PUB/TI/KA/SR/PR/SWR/2022-23 **Bengaluru**
S.W.Railways SWRRLY SWRRLY

PUBLIC NOTICE
My clients SRI. SRIHARI PALETI, S/o. Sri. P. Purna Reddy and his wife Smt. P. Jahnavi Reddy have intend to purchase the schedule property mentioned hereunder for a valuable consideration from its owner Sri. Kuppaiah, S/o. Sri. B. Venkataswamy Naida, Residing at No. 405, Happy Valley, Whitefield Main Road, Borewell Road, Bangalore- 560 066.
If any person/s having any claims, right, title and interest whatsoever over the schedule property may forward their objections to the undersigned in writing with supporting documents of your such claims, within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. Failing which it will be deemed that there are no claims, right, title and interest by anybody and my client will proceed further for completion of sale transaction and thereafter no claims will be considered.
SCHEDULE PROPERTY
All that piece and parcel of converted property bearing Site No. 2, the portion of BBMP Khata bearing serial No. 1670, comprised in converted land bearing New Sy. No. 46/1 Old No. 46) vide conversion order No.ALN (EVH)SR468/2012-13, DATED 05-07-2013, situated at Thubarahalli Village, Varthur Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, measuring East to West 30 Feet and North to South 40 Feet in all measuring 1200 Square Feet Together with building constructed thereon and bounded on: East by : Site No. 3, West by : Site No.1, North by : 25 Feet wide Road, South by : Land bearing Sy. No. 46/2.
MANJUNATHA & ASSOCIATES
K. N. MANJUNATHA CHARY, ROOPA. B. & B.N. JAGADISH KUMAR, Advocates, # 96, 1st Floor, 1st Main, 4th Cross, Maruthi Nagar, Madivala, Bangalore - 68 Mob: 9845066626, 7406000832, BANGALORE. DATE : 28-05-2022

PUBLIC NOTICE
The general public is hereby informed that my client Intends to purchase the property described in the schedule hereunder from its present owner **Mr. K. Naseer,** son of Mr. M.K.Bacha, residing at 46/1, 4th Cross, Al-Hadiya, Saraswathi Puram, 25 Feet Road, Near Corporation Community Hall Ulsoor, Bengaluru-560008. he having acquired title to the same under a Sale Deed dated 04.10.2012 registered as Document No. BNG(U)-VRT-3416/2012-13 in the office of the Senior Sub-Registrar, Varthur, Bangalore Urban District.
All persons having or claiming any right, title, estate or interest by way of inheritance, share, sale, mortgage, transfer lease, tenancy, lien, charge, trust, maintenance, easement, gift, devise, bequest, exchange, pre-emption, possession or encumbrance or otherwise howsoever into or upon the Schedule Property herein below described, are called upon to intimate the same in writing to the undersigned at the below given address, along with all original documents in support of such claim within **14 days** from the date of publication of this notice, failing which any such claim of any party shall be deemed to have been waived for all legal practical purposes and shall not be entertained hereafter and I shall opine that the Schedule Property is free of any claims and my client will be free to proceed with the proposed purchase of the Schedule Property.
SCHEDULE PROPERTY
All that piece and parcel being the **Southern Portion** of **Site No. 97** consisting of residential building having BBMP Khata **No. 588/598/616/97/1,** measuring East to West: 101 feet and North to South: (29.7 + 26.10)/2, totally measuring **2818 sq. ft** formed out of Survey No. 86/2. 3 and 4. having old Katha No. 616 situated in Bellandur Village, Varthur Hobli, Bengaluru East Taluk, Bengaluru, together with a residential building standing thereon consisting of stilt, ground, first, second and terrace floors, totally measuring **637.44 sq metres and bounded as follows:**
On the East by : Park Area measuring on that side 29.7 feet
On the West by : 50 feet Road, measuring on that side 26.10 feet
On the North by : Site No.99 measuring on that side 101 feet
On the South by : Site No. 95 measuring on that side 101 feet
Vivek Anand Anthony Britto
Vir Anthony Britto, Advocates
"Daisville" 633, 5th Main, Indiranagar II Stage, Bengaluru- 560 038.
Place: Bengaluru
Date: 30.05.2022

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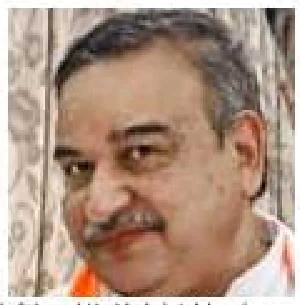
Irked Cong. leaders question choice of MLC, RS poll candidates

Several ticket aspirants have decided to raise the issue of criteria adopted in selection process during the two-day Chintan Shivir of the party to be held from June 2

NAGESH PRABHU
BENGALURU

Peeved over denial of ticket to contest the just-concluded MLC elections in the State, several aspirants of the Congress have decided to raise the issue of criteria adopted in selection of MLC candidates during the two-day Chintan Shivir of the party to be held from June 2.

A few leaders have also expressed disappointment over selection of former Union Minister Jairam Ramesh to the Rajya Sabha from the State. Senior leaders plan to submit a petition to the high command over "factionalism" in the party and selection of candidate for the Rajya Sabha.



Selection of M. Nagaraju Yadav (left) and K. Abdul Jabbar has not gone down well with many senior Congress leaders.

Other aspirants

Selection of former BMTC chairman M. Nagaraju Yadav in the category of OBC and K. Abdul Jabbar in the Muslim category has not gone down well with many senior party leaders. Sources said senior leaders such as S.R. Patil, Ivan D'souza, V.R. Sudarshan, V.S. Ugrappa, M.D. Lakshminarayana, Pushpa Amarnath, and Kavitha Reddy are disappointed.

Denial of ticket to the Lingayat community leaders in MLC and Rajya Sabha election has also irked some, sources said.

Mr. Lakshminarayana and Reddy have openly vented their ire against the party and plan to raise the issue at the Chintan Shivir.

Mr. Lakshminarayana, who was one of the aspirants for MLC ticket, wrote to KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar seeking allocation of time during the Chintan Shivir to discuss issues related to the selection of MLC candidates.

He has sought to know how many meetings were conducted over selection of candidates and what criteria was followed.

He asked how many MLC aspirants' names were recommended to the party high command and whether they were rejected. Factions in the Congress, one led by Siddaramaiah and another led by Mr. Shivakumar, would not augur well for the party in the coming elections, the former MLC said.

Upset over being denied MLC ticket, Ms. Reddy expressed her disappointment, saying that it was "unfair and disturbing when 50% of the population is ignored." She has been given show-cause notice by the party.

RS ticket issue

Speaking to *The Hindu*, senior leader and former Legislative Council Chairman V.R. Sudarshan said many legislators were unhappy with the party's nomination of Mr. Jairam Ramesh to the Rajya Sabha. "The State is facing several challenges on issues related to GST, language, border dispute," he said and questioned the contributions of Mr. Ramesh to the State and the party. Mr. Ramesh will file his nomination paper on Monday.

Senior leader and former Council Chairman B.L. Shankar said "no democratic process is followed in the selection of candidate for the Rajya Sabha. Collective decision making is the need of the hour as the State is going to elections next year. Leaders are working in islands. There is a need to build bridges to link islands".

When several leaders are quitting the party, it is appropriate to give ticket to those who have contributed to strengthen the party and raise issues related to the State in the Parliament. The legislators should discuss all these issues at the CLP meeting on Monday and at Chintan Shivir, Mr. Sudarshan said.

He regretted "lack of communication" between State and Central leaders. "What is the need to have the election committee when names are discussed between two or three leaders in the State?" he asked.

ED raids 'KGF Babu'

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

Sleuths from the Enforcement Directorate conducted a search and seizure operation on the premises linked to businessman and Congress politician Yusuf Sharief, well known as "KGF Babu".

Searches began at his Vasanth Nagar residence on Saturday morning and simultaneous raids were held at the residences of some of his associates and eight real estate companies associated with Mr. Sharief. The raids continued till evening and the ED was tight-lipped about the results.

Mr. Sharief, a real estate businessman, contested as Congress candidate in the MLC elections from Bengaluru Urban seat to be elected from local bodies in December 2021 and lost. He was in the spotlight for declaring ₹1,744 crore assets, historically the highest any politician has declared in the State. A Class V drop out, Mr. Sharief was a scrap dealer who made it big.

Patriotic trail

A 72-metre-long Indian flag being carried during the inauguration march of 'Amrutha Bharathige Kannadada Aarati', part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Saturday. • K. MURALI KUMAR

As elephants get near, people live in constant fear

Dept. to capture four jumbos and radio-collar them

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HASSAN

Human-elephant conflict is no new phenomenon in villages of Sakleshpur, Alur, and Belur taluks. But these days, herds are spotted closer to human habitation than ever, say the villagers. A tusker is sometimes spotted taking a stroll in the middle of the street in broad daylight, or a herd is seen moving from one farm to another.

Parents remain worried until their children return home after school hours and plantation workers are worried about their safety as they cannot spot an elephant amidst thick greenery.

Earlier this month, a plantation worker in Ballupete was trampled to death by an elephant. The next day, a woman came under the attack and suffered serious injuries. In March this year, two workers in a coffee estate at Kadegarje died in a similar attack.

"People outside the locality do not understand the severity of the problem. The Forest Minister has not bothered to visit our area to assess the situation. Every day, we get video clips and photos showing elephants in different locations. Vast acres of plantation and paddy fields have been damaged," said B.R. Manjunath, a planter in Sakleshpur taluk.

Members of the Sakleshpur block unit of Congress staged a protest on Bengaluru-Mangaluru Road condemning the government's inaction. For years, the people of the district have been demanding a permanent solution to the conflict. They want all the elephants roaming in the area captured and relocated. The Forest Department did take up such efforts in the past as well. However, the number of incidents came down only momentarily.

As per the latest data, 75 people have died in elephant attacks in the last 10 years. • FILE PHOTO

Conflict history

The conflict has a long history in Hassan. Since the 1980s, many incidents have been reported. As per the latest reports available with the Forest Department, so far 75 people have died in elephant attacks in the last 10 years. Besides that, around 30 elephants have died either due to electrocution, gunshot or some other unnatural reason. A tusker was found dead near Areahalli in Belur taluk on Thursday morning with gunshot wounds.

K.N. Basavaraj, Deputy Conservator of Forests in Hassan, said that the department will take up the operation to capture four elephants to radio-collar and relocate them in a week's time. "We could not take up the operation as per the earlier plan, due to rains. At present, the targeted animals are moving in different places, with a distance of about 40 km from one another. Executing the operation would be difficult. We are focusing on clustering of the animals so that we can capture them easily," he said.

One suspect surrenders

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HASSAN

The Forest Department had taken four people into custody in connection with the death of an elephant due to gunshots. One more person surrendered before the officers on Thursday night. The officers have recovered the rifle and bullets from the arrested.

K.N. Basavaraj, Deputy Conservator of Forests, said the accused had shot the animal in close range. The bullet had hit the skull and reached the brain, killing the animal immediately.

A 20-year-old tusker was found with gunshot wounds in an estate at Malasavara in Belur taluk on Thursday morning.

'Those with Hindi shorthand skills preferred for Kannada reporter post'

KDA writes to govt. seeking explanation on the logic behind this

JAYANTH R.
BENGALURU

In a move that has yet again riled Kannada activists, the State government has in its order on recruitment for posts of "Kannada reporters" in the Legislative Assembly stated that candidates with "proficiency in Hindi shorthand" would be given preference.

After the logic behind this "preference" was called into question by many, Kannada Development Authority (KDA) has written to the government seeking a clarification.

KDA chairperson T.S. Nagabharana, told *The Hindu*, "We are yet to get a response from the government. We will send a reminder. We are very clear that proficiency in Hindi shorthand should not be a criterion for the post of Kannada reporter in Legislature Assembly."

> **We are yet to get a response from the government. We will send a reminder. We are very clear that proficiency in Hindi shorthand should not be a criterion for the post of Kannada reporter in Legislature Assembly.**
>
> T.S. NAGABHARANA
> KDA chairperson

The background

The State government issued a gazette notification on April 26 to recruit people for the posts of Kannada reporters, computer operators, junior assistants, typists and dalayaths with specified qualifications and skills.

In the recruitment guidelines, degree from any recognised university is mandatory for those applying for the post of Kannada reporter. As an additional qualification, the candidate must have passed proficiency-level in Kannada shorthand and senior typewriting examination. In addition of that, the GO states that preference will be given to candidates who have passed proficiency-level Hindi shorthand.

Among those who objected to this was former chairperson of KDA, S.G. Siddaramaiah. "The State government talks of promoting Kannada, but is constantly working against the cause," he said.

Earlier instances

He cited earlier instances of Kannada interest being shortchanged in recruitment exams, including in railway and banking recruitment procedures. "Do they want to send all the reports of the Legislative Assembly to the Central government?" he asked, seeking an explanation on the logic.

Arun Javagal, Kannada activist, said that the Karnataka Rakshana Vedike would be writing to the government condemning this "direct promotion of Hindi."

CM and ex-CM spar over Aryan-Dravidian roots

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

A day after Congress Legislature Party leader Siddaramaiah questioned the roots of founders of the RSS, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Saturday asked the Congress leader to specify whether he was a Dravidian or Aryan.

"Let Leader of the Opposition Siddaramaiah first declare whether he is a Dravidian or Aryan," Mr. Bommai said while speaking to mediapersons on Saturday.

Responding to this later in the day, Mr. Siddaramaiah said, "Of course, I am a Dravidian, a native of this land." He further said that Aryans being migrants to India from Central Asia was a fact of history that cannot be disputed.

On Friday, Mr. Siddaramaiah had wondered if the founding fathers of the RSS, the BJP's ideological parent, were native Indians.

Continuing his attack on RSS in a series of 12 tweets on Saturday, Mr. Siddaramaiah sought to know why RSS, "which talks like the sole defender of Hinduism" supports only one politically party, that is the BJP. "Are only those in BJP Hindus?" he asked.

In another tweet he sought to know the status of Dalits and backward classes in the organisations and what the qualification was to be a "Hindu as per the RSS" and if it did not include a belief in the principles of social justice. He challenged the RSS to shun "remote control politics" and enter the electoral fray directly.

Stringent action will be taken against MES: CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Strongly condemning the vandalism by MES activists in Belagavi, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai has warned of stringent action.

"The State government will not tolerate any acts of vandalism. Those who try to take law into their hands would be dealt with seriously. The police are taking appropriate action," Mr. Bommai told mediapersons on Saturday.

The police recently arrested nine persons over charges of attacking a youth in Damane village in Belagavi district on Friday. The victim's family had complained to the police that a group of MES followers had attacked the victim after they took objection to playing of Kannada songs in a local wedding procession.

Reacting to the demand of the Janata Dal (Secular) and Congress leaders for removing the Chairman of the Textbook Review Committee Rohith Chakratirtha from his post, Mr. Bommai said the issue would be discussed with the Education Minister. "A suitable action will be taken after ascertaining facts," he said.

On the hijab issue which resurfaced in Mangaluru, Mr. Bommai said it has been resolved at the Syndicate meeting through deliberations. "The court has delivered its orders. Everyone should obey the court orders," he said.

He further said students should follow the orders of the College Development Committee in PU colleges and the College Administrative Board or principal in colleges which do not have the CDC.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This notice is hereby given to the public that my client **Mrs. Geetu Sharma** is the owner of the **Flat No A-003** in **Springfields**, situated at, Sy. 19 &20 **Ambalipura village Varthur Hobli Bangalore East Taluk.** The originals of the above mentioned flat, **absolute Sale Deed, Sale & Construction agreement, Assignment agreement, Khata certificate and Extract were LOST on 15/05/2022** and are not traceable and consequently, a **police complaint** has been lodged in this regard with Bangalore city Police station Bengaluru on 26/05/2022 by the owner.

Any person or persons finding the documents or asserting any right, title, interest or claim in the schedule property or against the owners should write to the under signed within **10 days** from the date of issuance of this Notice with all documentary proof, on which they are basing & asserting their rights, with regard to the schedule property or any part thereof, after which period it will be treated that there are no claims of whatsoever nature with regard to the Schedule Property.

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OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

OUR DEEPEST CONDOLENCES

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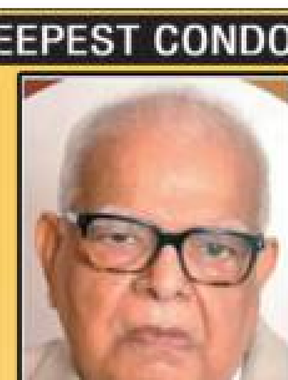

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IN BRIEF

Grand start to NTR's birth centenary fete

ONGOLE

The year-long birth centenary celebrations of the Telugu Desam Party founder N.T. Rama Rao began on a grand note in Andhra Pradesh. Kickstarting the celebrations, TDP national president N. Chandrababu Naidu said NTR's ₹2-a-kg rice scheme had become a model for all States to make hunger a thing of the past.

4 die in house collapse due to gas leak in A.P.

ANANTAPUR

Four members of a family were killed when two portions of a house collapsed following a blast reportedly due to LPG leak in one of the kitchens, at Mulakaledu village of Andhra Pradesh's Anantapur district on Saturday. According to the police, the incident took place around 4.10 a.m. when the victims were sleeping.

Three electrocuted while pulling temple chariot

HYDERABAD

Three persons were electrocuted in Nalgonda district of Telangana after an iron chariot of Sri Sitarama Swamy temple came in contact with overhead high-tension electric wires. One person suffered injuries and was rushed to a nearby government hospital.

Boy's father arrested in 'provocative' slogan case

ALAPPUZHA

The Kerala police on Saturday arrested the father of the boy who chanted provocative slogans at a Popular Front of India rally in Alappuzha on May 21. Though the boy was traced two days ago, the family had gone into hiding. The police took the boy's father into custody after the family returned to the house. The police also arrested four others related to the case.

Venkaiah against imposition of languages

We should not oppose any language but should support our language first, he says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu on Saturday made a strong case for learning mother tongues and against imposition of languages. "Mother tongue is like our eyesight and other languages are like spectacles. "If we have eyesight, spectacles will work. If we don't have eyesight, spectacles will not work," he said after unveiling the 16-foot statue of former Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi at the Omandurar Government Estate in Chennai.

Kalaignar honoured: M. Venkaiah Naidu unveils the statue of M. Karunanidhi. • S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

He said he respected 'Kalaignar' (Karunanidhi) because he promoted Tamil language, culture and literature and every person in public life must do it. Mr. Naidu said that when people trigger controversy, his suggestion would be "no imposition of any language and no opposition to any language". "We should not oppose any language, but should support our language first," he said.

"Learn as many languages as possible. If you want to work on a larger canvas, you need to learn the language spoken by a majority of the people. You need to learn international languages also. But you must master your mother tongue and then you will excel," he said. He also advised youngsters to promote their mother tongue. "Speak in you mother tongue at home. Leave this 'Mommy Daddy' culture. Amma comes from the heart," he added.

Mr. Naidu said he was happy that "Tamil people keep alive their culture and dress, tradition, music, the art and literature. People promote them and the government also propagates them. That is the way forward for all of us," he said.

"The country cannot progress without the development of States... We have a strong nation with an able leadership. We have different political parties ruling different States... all of us must work together for the welfare of our people, taking care of the downtrodden. The Centre and the States should work together as Team India," he said.

He said Karunanidhi was one of the iconic leaders and the great sons of India who put people at the centre of their work. "I have no hesitation in saying that he was one of the able administrators who gave a stable government and worked for the welfare of the downtrodden and social justice to various sections," he said.

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said that what was special about the statue was it was standing between the statues of Anna and Periyar on the arterial Anna Salai. "Even though an hospital is functioning from the venue, it is still a dream fort of Kalaignar," he said.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY

TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Sunday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and Kerala. Thunderstorm with lightning/gusty winds likely at isolated places over Haryana, Delhi, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Telangana, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar Islands

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	21	33.2	22.8	Kozhikode	0.7	32.7	25.2
Ahmedabad	–	41.9	28.5	Kurnool	–	39.2	27.1
Aizawl	11	26.0	18.4	Lucknow	1	39.9	26.5
Allahabad	–	42.0	26.6	Madurai	1	37.7	24.3
Bengaluru	–	30.6	21.2	Mangaluru	7.2	33.0	24.5
Bhopal	–	40.2	27.8	Mumbai	–	34.8	28.8
Bhubaneswar	–	37.8	27.4	Mysuru	–	33.0	21.0
Chandigarh	–	38.8	29.7	New Delhi	–	40.2	26.9
Chennai	–	39.8	28.4	Patna	–	37.7	26.4
Coimbatore	–	33.8	23.4	Port Blair	11	30.8	25.6
Dehradun	–	35.4	23.0	Puducherry	–	37.0	25.6
Gangtok	–	21.7	14.5	Pune	–	35.9	23.8
Goa	2	33.2	25.8	Raipur	–	40.6	27.4
Guwahati	–	35.4	23.8	Ranchi	3	35.0	22.2
Hubballi	–	33.0	22.0	Shillong	–	23.6	14.9
Hyderabad	–	39.2	26.6	Shimla	–	30.2	21.0
Imphal	–	30.0	21.5	Srinagar	12.5	24.0	13.0
Jaipur	–	39.8	30.5	Thiruvananthapuram	–	32.1	24.8
Kochi	8	31.2	25.0	Tiruchi	–	38.1	26.5
Kohima	–	24.5	15.2	Vijayawada	–	43.4	28.0
Kolkata	–	38.3	27.4	Visakhapatnam	–	33.7	27.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing — **Yesterday**

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	11	12	..–	.179	.152	
Bengaluru	9	83	...6	.110	.110	
Chennai	9	32	.45	...74	...57	
Delhi	10	30	.36	.226	.265	
Hyderabad	31	33	.19	...54	.113	
Kolkata	17	15	.27	.165	.138	
Lucknow	6	71	.47	.145	.146	
Mumbai	3	1	.21	.230	.500	
Pune	8	16	114	...91	...70	
Visakhapatnam	15	49	.14	.145	.155	

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Sirsa, Haryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 291 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Gadag, Karnataka recorded a healthy AQI score of 30

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Inspired by *KGF 2*, teen smokes a pack, falls sick

Hyderabad boy has been counselled

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

A 15-year-old boy from Hyderabad, who was inspired by the protagonist Rocky Bhai from Kannada film *KGF Chapter Two*, smoked a pack of cigarettes in two days in his very first attempt and fell sick. He was brought to a private hospital with complaints of breathlessness, dry cough and sore throat. Doctors at Century Hospital, Banjara Hills, said they had treated the teenager, who was brought for outpatient consultation.

The hospital's consultant pulmonologist Dr. Rohith Reddy Pathuri said that he took an x-ray of the patient's chest but found nothing suspicious. The doctor observed a burnt mark on the middle finger of the teenager's right hand. When asked, the boy admitted to have smoked. His parents fumed on hearing it, but Dr. Pathuri asked them to step out of the room and spoke to the boy.

"When I asked him why he smoked, the teenager said he found Rocky Bhai in *KGF Chapter Two* stylish. So he smoked too," said Dr. Pathuri. Despite developing some discomfort after two cigarettes, he completed the pack in two days.

Dr. Pathuri said he had counselled the teenager by explaining him the dangers of smoking.

Row over exclusion of *Home* from Kerala film award list

STAFF REPORTER
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The jury decisions of the 52nd Kerala State Film Awards kicked up a controversy on Saturday over the film *Home*, produced by rape-accused Vijay Babu, not being chosen for awards in any category. Film personalities and politicians waded into the debate on whether it is right to overlook a movie just because its producer is an accused, although jury chairman Saeed Mirza said the controversy did not influence the jury's decision.

A still from the Malayalam movie *Home*.

Speaking to the media, actor Indrans, whose role in *Home* was much appreciated, said he was not disappointed about him not getting the Best Actor Award, but was sad at the film not being considered.

"I had expected *Home* to win an award. Maybe, the jury has not seen the film. Can an entire family be punished if a family member becomes an accused in a case? Will they reconsider the awards if he is acquitted in the case," he asked.

Mr. Mirza said that *Home* was among the 29 shortlisted films. "The controversy certainly did not influence our decision. We came to these award proposals unanimously and *Home* got left out," Mr. Mirza said.

Techie kills wife, two kids and ends life

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Four members of a family were found dead in a pool of blood at their house at Pozhichalur near Pallavaram on Saturday.

The head of the family, an IT worker, allegedly murdered his wife and two children before taking his own life, the police said.

The victims were identified as Prakash, 41, his wife Gayathri, 39, their daughter Nithyashri, 13, and son Hariharan, 8. The tragedy came to light when Prakash's father went to their home on Saturday morning.

Tambaram Commissioner of Police M. Ravi and Deputy Commissioner of Police M.R. Sibi Chakravarthy inspected the scene of crime.

Experts from the Forensic Science Department collected samples. The police recovered a suicide note from the house. Preliminary investigation revealed that Prakash could have taken the extreme step as he ran into debt while trying to expand his wife's Siddha medicine outlet. Mr. Ravi said, "As per our initial investigation, Prakash procured an electric wood-cutting machine online on May 19. He murdered his wife and children before ending his life. It is suspected that he took the extreme decision because of financial burden and we have recovered a suicide note stuck on the wall."

A senior officer said there was no sign of struggle by the children and the woman. It is suspected that they were given sedatives before being murdered. Prakash also drank alcohol.

The police recovered a document that showed that they had taken a loan of ₹3.5 lakh.

(Assistance for overcoming suicidal thoughts is available on the State's health helpline 104 and Sneha's suicide prevention helpline 044-24640050.)

Book-hopping

Booklovers going around stores meeting well-known authors as part of the BooksHopping initiative in and around Church Street and M.G. Road in Bengaluru on Saturday. Six bookshops — Blossom Book House, Bookworm, The Book Hive, Goobe's Book Republic, Select Book Shop, and Higginbotham's — took up the initiative with an aim to bring back the reading experience in local bookshops. • K. MURALI KUMAR

'Act against those distorting State anthem'

Seer writes to Karnataka Chief Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Nirmalananda Swami of Adichunchanagiri Mutt has written to Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai demanding action against those who have distorted the State anthem *Jaya Bharata Jananiya Tanujate* and have written defamatory articles against poet laureate Kuvempu who has penned it.

Nirmalananda Swami

Violation of law

"If someone is distorting the State anthem, it is akin to deforming the national anthem itself and it is a clear violation of the law of the land. I hope the Chief Minister and the State government initiate action against such individuals under the cyber crime law. The government must send out a clear message that such insults and attacks will not be tolerated," the seer wrote in his letter, a statement from Adichunchanagiri Mutt said.

Rohith Chakrathirtha, who has been under the spotlight over textbook revision carried out by the committee that he heads, had sometime ago shared a spoof of the State anthem on Facebook, drawing the ire of many.

However, the seer's letter does not name any individual, but only seeks action against whoever has indulged in such acts.

Cave unveils archaeological treasures

It was exposed during Jalanidhi pipeline work in Kerala's Palakkad district

ABDUL LATHEEF NAHA
PALAKKAD

A laterite cave discovered at Koodallur in Anakkara grama panchayat in Kerala's Palakkad district on Friday has exposed an amazing treasure of archaeological value for researchers focussing on Kerala's megalithic culture.

A team of archaeologists who examined the rock-cut cave on Saturday found it double chambered bearing typical Iron Age features. A large number of grave goods were unearthed during the exploration.

State Archaeology Department Curator Athira R. Pillai, who led the exploration, told *The Hindu* that the rock-cut cave was a rich site with immense potential for further studies. The grave goods found in the eastern and western chambers of the cave included a wide variety of pottery, iron implements and skeletal fragments.

New find: The iron objects unearthed from a laterite rock-cut cave at Koodallur in Palakkad district. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"The skeletal fragments are a boon for us. It can be dated scientifically," said K. Rajan, megalithic researcher and senior history teacher from SNGS College, Pattambi.

Mr. Rajan was the first to examine the site after it was exposed during a Jalanidhi pipeline work on Friday. He said it was a typical megalithic monument in scooped out laterite. According to him, the twin chambers were used for secondary burial.

The pottery recovered from the chambers included pots, cooking vessels, lids, ring stand, bowls, dishes and shallow dishes. Besides, red and black russet coated painted (RCP) ware was also found in the cave. The iron objects recovered included a knife, a dagger, iron bar hook and a hanging lamp stand. When some of the black and red wares were in good condition, the iron objects were corroded.

Ration shops to become Kerala Stores

They will act as multi-service centres and will benefit residents of rural areas

STAFF REPORTER
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Nearly 1,000 ration outlets in remote locations in Kerala will soon become multi-service centres that will be known as Kerala Stores (K-Stores).

The K-Stores will provide ATM services that will enable users to withdraw up to ₹5,000, utility services, bill payment facility, various e-services that are being provided by Akshaya centres, cooking gas, and include Supplyco outlets and Milma booths.

Announcing the endeavour while inaugurating the Civil Supplies Department's diamond jubilee celebrations here on Saturday, Food and Civil Supplies Minister G.R. Anil said the stores would prove to be beneficial for the residents of rural areas that lacked ATMs, banks, Akshaya centres, Milma outlets, Supplyco stores and gas agencies.

Minister G.R. Anil launching the logo of the diamond jubilee celebrations of the Civil Supplies Department on Saturday.

In the first phase, one K-Store will be launched in each district. The initiative that is part of the efforts to modernise public distribution outlets will be formally launched in June, he said.

He raised caution on the various challenges facing the State in public distribution due to the Centre's policies. The significant cut in wheat allocation is bound to lead to shortage in food availability since the move will deny wheat supply for non-priority ration cardholders. The Centre has also reduced the allocation of kerosene that was being provided to the fisherfolk and other underprivileged sections.

Mr. Anil said the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government had issued 2,14,274 new ration cards within a year. These included 1,53,242 cards that were provided to priority sections after being surrendered by ineligible cardholders.

FROM PAGE ONE

Setback to India in Indo-Pacific exchange

The scope of information sharing for MDA has significantly expanded in recent years among Quad countries as well as with littoral states against the backdrop of expanding Chinese naval presence across the region.

Elaborating on the value addition ILOs bring in, the official stated that ILOs bring to the table one's local expertise which we are not aware of and can't be determined from here and also help in building linkages with various agencies in their home countries.

Aligning interest

At a different level, countries in the neighbourhood joining our information sharing framework is a strategic statement that these countries are aligning with India for their security needs, the official noted. The initiative will lose steam if not acted upon immediately as countries will lose interest, one South Block official cautioned.

The official cited earlier said it is not just important to have ILOs in India, but also equally important that Indian Navy officers be posted at similar centres in other countries.

The IPMDA initiative was announced at the Quad Leaders' Summit in Tokyo on May 24 to track "dark shipping" and to build a "faster, wider, and more accurate maritime picture of near-real-time activities in partners' waters" integrating three critical regions in the Indo-Pacific – the Pacific Islands, Southeast Asia, and the IOR.

Pending proposals

Proposals to post Indian naval liaison officers (LO) at the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC), Madagascar, and the Regional Coordination Operations Centre, Seychelles, have been pending for more than two years.

Another proposal to post an LO at the European-led mission in the Strait of Hormuz (EMASOH) in Abu Dhabi has also not been approved so far.

In addition, there is a delay in continuing the present LOs as well. India has had an LO at the IFC in Singapore since 2009. Officials had described that this is in the overall realm of improving linkages of the IFC-IOR with the other IFCs and eventually becoming the repository for all maritime data in the IOR.

No monkeypox cases reported in India so far

Stating that the absence of monkeypox cases in India should not lead to lack of preparedness or lowering of guard against the virus, Pragya Yadav, scientist and group leader at the maximum containment laboratory at the Indian Council of Medical Research-National Institute of Virology, Pune, said, "We must understand that the danger is imminent with this pathogen registering its presence in previously non-endemic countries, scientists seeing no established travel links to the spread and also community spread indicated in some regions."

The WHO said that nearly 200 cases of monkeypox had been reported in over 20 countries not usually known to have such outbreaks. Terming the situation "containable", the WHO, during its public briefing on Friday, said there were still many unanswered questions regarding what triggered the unprecedented outbreak of monkeypox outside Africa. The agency said there was no evidence of any genetic changes in the virus being responsible for the current outbreak.

"The first sequencing of the virus shows that the strain is not different from the strains we can find in endemic countries and (this outbreak) is probably due more to a change in human behaviour," Sylvie Briand, WHO's director of pandemic and epidemic diseases, said.

Dr. Yadav cautioned, "India has reported cases of cow and buffalo pox in humans indicating animal-to-human transmission. Monkeypox is an exotic pathogen for us as we haven't been exposed to it."

Acute hepatitis

The WHO said 650 probable cases of acute hepatitis of unknown aetiology in children had been reported from 33 countries in five WHO Regions between April 5 and May 26.

"The aetiology of this severe acute hepatitis remains unknown and under investigation; the cases are more clinically severe and a higher proportion develop acute liver failure compared with previous reports of acute hepatitis of unknown aetiology in children. It remains to be established whether and where the detected cases are above-expected baseline levels. WHO assesses the risk at the global level as moderate," it said.

The WHO noted that the majority of reported cases were from the WHO European Region.

Earlier this month, doctors in India raised alarm over a spike in unexplained hepatitis in children who had tested positive for COVID-19. This was after a team of doctors from Bundelkhand Medical College, Sagar, Madhya Pradesh, and the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Research, Chandigarh, reported that an investigation of 475 children who tested positive for COVID-19 between April and July 2021 showed 37 of them had Covid Acquired Hepatitis (CAH). The WHO maintained that these cases of acute hepatitis could be linked to COVID-19 vaccines are not supported. The vast majority of children affected had not been vaccinated.

IndiGo fined for denying boarding

After a three-week probe, the DGCA has found that IndiGo ground staff's handling of the special needs child was "deficient" and lacking in sensitivity. "A more compassionate handling would have smoothened the nerves, calmed the child and obviated the need for denying boarding to the passengers,," DGCA Director-General Arun Kumar said in a press statement.

These findings are based on a fact-finding exercise carried out by a three-member committee constituted by the DGCA which visited the Ranchi airport, met the family members of the special needs child, an eyewitness and IndiGo officials.

The DGCA has also said that it will make amendments to its rules (or the Civil Aviation Requirement) on "Carriage by Air – persons with disability or with reduced mobility" to ensure written consultation with the airport doctor on the state of the passenger's health as well as the opinion of the Pilot-in-Command on allowing such a passenger on board before someone is denied boarding.

'Northeast helps in global outreach'

Prioritisation of region makes it clear that India should work with trusted global partners: Jaishankar

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Saturday indicated Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar and Nepal were India's most trusted global partners along with Japan and members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

At the inaugural session of the two-day NADI-3 Asian Confluence River Conclave in Guwahati, Mr. Jaishankar said the prioritisation of the northeast, comprising eight States, by the Narendra Modi government had made it obvious that India should work with its most trusted global partners.

"What happens when the northeast, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar get more deeply intertwined – each of them stands to benefit from more access, opportunities, resources and markets. These endeavours will literally bring ASEAN closer to us," he said.

S. Jaishankar with Himanta Biswa Sarma and delegates from Asian countries, during NADI-3 on Saturday. • PTI

He also lauded the catalytic role Japan had been playing as India's co-partner for global outreach.

"In 2017, we launched the India-Japan Act East Forum as a platform to bring together all the stakeholders and coordinate planning and implementation of the projects being undertaken with Japanese assistance," Mr. Jaishankar said.

"Diplomacy is not just about bridging positions through wordsmithery. It is equally about bridging societies through projects. It is about connectivity, contacts and cooperation," he said, underscoring the participation of his Bangladeshi counterpart A.K. Abdul Memon and the ASEAN Ambassadors at the conference.

Civilisational bridge

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said Assam acted as a cultural and civilisational bridge between India and the ASEAN region besides providing the land link. "Due to its strategic location, Assam provides a great opportunity for economic growth," he said.

Ports, Shipping and Ayush Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said the seeds of the historical and cultural relations between Assam and ASEAN were sown by Chaolung Sukapha, the architect of the greater Assamese society who came to the region from Southeast Asia, in the 13th century.

NADI initiative

NADI, meaning river, is an initiative to articulate and activate a collective vision of sub-regional cooperation in the Bay of Bengal region and with South East Asia. It recognises the region south of Himalayas from the Ganga and the Brahmaputra to the Mekong as a contiguity of river basins with common challenges that require close cooperation beyond their political borders.

NADI is also aimed at building confidence in the key role of India's north-eastern region taking forward strategic initiatives for energy and water security in the neighbourhood and in the Bay of Bengal region, leading towards a vibrant and secure Indo-Pacific.

424 in Punjab lose police security cover

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

The Punjab Police has withdrawn the security cover of as many as 424 people, including current and former legislators, religious sect heads and police officers.The order includes the name of Giani Harpreet Singh, chief priest of the Akal Takht – the highest Sikh temporal seat.

An order issued on May 26 by the Additional Director General of Police (Security), states that "the security personnel were being withdrawn on a purely temporary basis in connection with an emergent law and order duty".

While Shiromani Akali Dal reacted sharply to the decision saying it has exposed AAP's dislike for Sikh institutions, Giani Harpreet Singh said he did not require security from the Punjab government.

Trafficking survivor gets HC's help

She has been in Liluah Home at Howrah for safe custody since December 2017

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court has granted relief to a trafficking survivor, pointing out that successful completion of the trial in the cases cannot be cited as the reason to stall repatriation of the victim to her own country.

The petitioner, a Bangladeshi national, had approached the High Court challenging a magistrate court order rejecting her repatriation on grounds that it would affect the ongoing trial in the cases.

"Success in the trial cannot be a ground to stall repatriation of the victim lady to her own country. After all, she is a victim in this case and while the accused are at large, the victim is languishing in protective custody," Justice Jay Sengupta said in the order. The High Court thus set aside the order that Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate, Bongaon, North 24 Parganas passed on March 19, 2021.

Being safe: Many trafficking victims are lodged in State-run homes in various parts of the country. • K. MURALI KUMAR

Exploitation, rescue

The High Court's order, earlier this month, pointed out that the Bangladeshi national was trafficked to India "for the purpose of exploitation in the flesh trade". She was rescued and a case was registered on December 9, 2017 under Sections 370, 371, 120B, and 34 of the Indian Penal Code and Sections 3, 4, 5, 7 of the Immoral Traffic Act. The survivor was sent to Liluah Home at Howrah for safe custody on December 10, 2017.

In the meantime, a chargesheet was submitted but the investigating agency could not arrest the accused.

While trafficking from economically backward regions of the State remains a matter of concern, there are incidents of Bangladeshi nationals being trafficked to India. The South Bengal Frontier of the BSF guarding the West Bengal-Bangladesh border has rescued 33 victims, mostly Bangladeshi nationals (28 women and five minor girls) and registered 29 cases in 2021.

Nihar Ranjan Raptan, director of Goranbose Gram Bikash Kendra (GGBK), an organisation working for the rehabilitation of trafficking survivors, said that a number of Bangladeshi women are lodged in various state-run homes not only in West Bengal but also in other parts of the country such as Mumbai and Pune.

"The survivors do not want to stay in the homes and sometimes they give wrong addresses and identity as residents of West Bengal just to return home," Mr. Raptan said.

Trinamool MP raises charges against judges

Opposition slams Abhishek Banerjee

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Trinamool Congress national general secretary and MP Abhishek Banerjee on Saturday accused some in the judiciary of "working hand in glove" with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government at the Centre.

The remarks drew criticism from the Opposition.

"I am ashamed to say that in the judiciary, there are one or two who are working hand in glove [with the Centre] as flag-bearers, only 1% of it [the judiciary]. They are ordering a CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation) probe at the drop of the hat. Investigation in a murder case is being stayed. Have you heard [of] anything like this?" Mr. Banerjee said at a public gathering at Haldia in Purba Medinipur district.

The Trinamool leader said that if someone wanted to take action against him for telling the truth, they could and that he would "tell the truth 10,000 times before camera".

Mr. Banerjee's remarks come at a time when the State government is grappling with cases in which the Calcutta High Court has ordered CBI investigation over the past few months.

Congress State president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said that those who believed in parliamentary democracy and the Constitution should not attack the judiciary in such a manner.

BJP spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya said that the remarks were "unfortunate", and arose from the Trinamool Congress's disappointment over the recent orders of the Calcutta High Court.

CITU complains to ILO on anganwadi layoffs

Its general secretary says retrenchments are a gross violation of the workers' fundamental rights

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) has approached the International Labour Organisation (ILO) against the Haryana and Delhi governments for retrenching 975 and 991 anganwadi workers, respectively, for striking work demanding an increase in honorarium.

CITU general secretary Tapan Sen said in his complaint to Maria Helena Andre, Director, Bureau for Workers Activities (ACTRAV) of the ILO, that the retrenchments had taken place "under knowledge and instigation" by the Centre.

Mr. Sen argued that the retrenchments were a gross violation of several principles of fundamental rights of the workers as enshrined in ILO Conventions, ILO recommendations and declarations.

Ignored observation

He said the governments also ignored the observation of Committee on Freedom of Association that the final decision concerning illegality of strikes should not be made by the government, especially in those cases in which the government is a party to the dispute.

When contacted, Delhi State Women and Child Development Minister Kailash Gehlot declined to comment and said the matter is *sub judice*. The anganwadi workers had approached the Delhi High Court against the retrenchments.

Fight for survival: Anganwadi workers protesting in Haryana demanding an increase in honorarium. • FILE PHOTO

Mr. Sen said these workers had worked in the frontline during the COVID-19 pandemic situation, in coordination with the health departments concerned, without any additional wages or risk allowance, despite their service being duly acknowledged by the government.

"These workers are paid wages termed as 'honorarium' which is far less than the minimum wages of the country. The last increase in remuneration was made in 2018 by the Government of India. But several State governments including the States of Delhi and Haryana did not implement this increase," the complaint said, adding that workers went on strike as the last resort after duly serving strike notice.

"The Haryana government has terminated 975 anganwadi workers, all of them leaders of the trade union," Mr. Sen said.

Assam CM sends notice to Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has issued a show-cause notice to Tea Tribes and Employment Minister Sanjay Kishan for apologising to chief of separatist organisation United Liberation Front of Asom(Independent) (ULFA-I) Paresh Baruah.

Mr. Kishan had said sorry to the ULFA(I) chief for calling him a liar. The CM asked the Minister to explain why he apologised to Baruah. The ULFA(I) had asked Mr. Kishan to either apologise or be "banned" from entering Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts.

Three women, two children found dead

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

The bodies of three sisters, married to three brothers, and their two children were found in a well in Jaipur district's Dudu town on Saturday, with the women's family members alleging that they were being harassed by their in-laws.

The deceased were identified as sisters Kalu Devi, 27, Mamta Meena, 23, and Kamlesh Meena, 20. One of the children, Harshit, was four years old and the other was less than a month old. Two of the women were pregnant at the time of their death.

(Those who need help with suicidal thoughts may contact the State's helpline 104)

Bihar to authorise exploration of country's 'largest' gold reserve

Jamui district has 222 million tonnes, says a GSI survey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PATNA

The Bihar government has decided to accord permission for exploration of the "country's largest" gold reserve in Jamui district, a senior official said on Saturday.

As per a Geological Survey of India (GSI) survey, around 222.88 million tonnes of gold reserve, including 37.6 tonnes of the mineral-rich ore, are present in the district.

"The State Mines and Geology Department is in consultation with agencies engaged in exploration, including GSI and the National Mineral Development Corporation, for exploration of gold reserves in Jamui," Additional Chief Secretary-cum-Mines Commissioner Harjot Kaur Bamhrah said.

Bihar has 44% of the total gold reserves in the country. • GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

"The consultation started after analysing the GSI findings that indicated the presence of gold in areas such as Karmatia, Jhajha and Sono in Jamui district."

She said the government is likely to sign an MoU with a central agency or agencies for G3 (preliminary) stage exploration within a month. In certain areas, G2 (general) exploration could also be done, Ms. Bamhrah said.

Union Minister of Mines Pralhad Joshi had last year informed the Lok Sabha that Bihar holds the highest share of India's gold reserves.

In a written reply, he had said that Bihar has 222.885 million tonnes of gold metal, which amounts to 44% of the total gold reserves in the country.

'Savarkar's words could have averted Partition'

He was for 'complete India': Adityanath

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

Had the Congress listened to Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, then the country would have been "spared the tragedy" of Partition, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Saturday.

Mr. Adityanath made the remarks while launching a book in Hindu on Savarkar's life, titled *Veer Savarkar: The one who could have prevented the division of India and his vision on national security.*

Mr. Adityanath said it was unfortunate that after Independence, several parties had tried to compare Savarkar to Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan. Savarkar had said that while his vision was for a "*sampoorna* Bharat" [complete India], Jinnah's views were "parochial" and of a "nation breaker", Mr. Adityanath said, adding, "[Savarkar had said] Jinnah only talks of Muslims."

The CM further said Savarkar had stated that he favoured the laws implemented on Hindus also be implemented on Muslims, Christians and Parsis.

Mr. Adityanath said Savarkar was a great hero of the 20th century. There was no greater "revolutionary, writer, poet and philosopher" than Savarkar, he said, adding that it was extraordinary for one person to have all these qualities.

Keep survey report away from public domain: mosque panel

District court to hear Gyanvapi masjid-Kashi Vishwanath temple case tomorrow

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

With the district court in Varanasi set to hear the Gyanvapi Mosque-Kashi Vishwanath temple dispute again on Monday, an application has been filed before the court by a lawyer representing the Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Committee, seeking that the report of the mosque's survey be kept from the public domain.

The application has been filed before the court of District and Sessions Judge, Varanasi, A.K. Vishvesha, and has sought that the report of the survey and any videos and photographs of it be shared only with the parties in the dispute, given the sensitivity of the case.

Filed on Friday, the application states that several parties unrelated to the court proceedings, including some media organisations, have submitted pleas seeking a copy of the survey report and videos and photographs taken during the survey.

Sensitive site: Muslim devotees leave after offering Friday prayers amid tight security at Gyanvapi mosque. • PTI

It states that these parties have no relation whatsoever to the ongoing proceedings.

This application has been filed in one of the suits related to the dispute that is currently being heard.

However, advocate Ranjana Agnihotri, who is representing the plaintiffs in the suit that is set to be taken up for hearing on Monday, said that the contents of the survey report should be made public.

"Public opinion is very important," she said.

The district court on May 26 directed all parties in the dispute to submit their objections to the survey report. It had also said that it will first hear the masjid committee's plea under Order 7 Rule 11 of the Code of Civil Procedure, challenging the maintainability of the Hindus' suit, as directed by the Supreme Court.

The survey was ordered by a civil court in Varanasi that was earlier hearing the matter. But before the report of the survey was submitted, the court heard a representation from advocates of the Hindu petitioners and ordered the sealing of the mosque. Videos alleged to be part of the survey were leaked in the public domain, prompting the Hindu plaintiffs to claim the discovery of a *shivling* while the Muslim side argued that it was part of a fountain of the mosque's *wuzu khana*. The masjid panel had then approached the Supreme Court, which directed that the sealing order should not in any way prevent Muslims from accessing the mosque.

Congress holds deliberations to draw up list of RS nominees

Sitting MP Vivek Tankha named from Madhya Pradesh

SANDEEP PHUKAN
NEW DELHI

The suspense over whether dissident leaders like Ghulam Nabi Azad and Anand Sharma would be Congress nominees for the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections continued on Saturday amid hectic meetings led by party chief Sonia Gandhi to finalise the list.

The party is expected to win eight Rajya Sabha berths, mainly from party-ruled States like Rajasthan (3) and Chattishgarh (2), as well as in States where it is part of the ruling alliance like Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra.

Madhya Pradesh Congress chief Kamal Nath announced that sitting member Vivek Tankha would be repeated from the State, where the party has enough lawmakers to win one seat.

Though the party has not yet formally announced its nominees so far, senior leaders like P. Chidambaram and Jairam Ramesh are believed to be top contenders from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, both States where the Congress can win one seat each.

The Rajya Sabha contenders include Rajeev Shukla, Mukul Wasnik, Ajay Maken, Randeep Surjewala and Pramod Tiwari apart from Mr. Azad and Mr. Sharma, both of whom belong to G-23, the ginger group that sought internal reforms and collective leadership.

Over a phone call from Bhopal after the announcement, Mr. Tankha, said he was grateful to the party leadership for giving him the opportunity. The veteran lawyer is expected to fill his nomination papers on Monday

Earlier in the day, Ms. Gandhi had met general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal to discuss possible candidates and some reports suggested that former party chief Rahul Gandhi may have joined in the deliberations virtually. Ms. Gandhi also met with the Chhattisgarh Pradesh Congress Committee chief, Mohan Markam. The party can also win one seat from Haryana on the basis of its MLA strength and the Congress chief has already had a discussion with former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda. In Rajasthan, the Congress has decided to contest all the three seats though its numbers may fall short for one seat.

Among the allies, the Congress is facing resistance from the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) as JMM Chief and Chief Minister Hemant Soren is unwilling to give the lone Rajya Sabha seat to them.

(With inputs from Shubhomoy Sikdar in Raipur)

AAP names RS nominees from Punjab

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Saturday announced the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) nominees for the Rajya Sabha polls, slated for June 10.

The Chief Minister said that noted environmentalist Balbir Singh Seechewal and entrepreneur-philanthropist Vikramjit Singh Sahney would be the party candidates for the Rajya Sabha seats from the State. He tweeted, "I am very happy to inform that the Aam Aadmi Party is nominating two Padma Shri awardees as members of the Rajya Sabha. One environment lover Padma Shri Sant Balbir Singh Seechewal, the other is Padma Shri Vikramjit Singh Sahney."

The term of Rajya Sabha members, including the Congress' Ambika Soni and Balwinder Singh Bhunder of the Shiromani Akali Dal, is due to expire on July 4.

Chhattisgarh ex-CM kicks up controversy

Remarks misconstrued: Raman Singh

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
RAIPUR

On the concluding day of the two-day working committee meeting of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Friday, a statement purportedly by three-time former Chief Minister Raman Singh kicked up a controversy.

A war of words between Dr. Singh's BJP and the ruling Congress ensued over reports of the former's statement that "the BJP was on a sticky wicket in Chhattisgarh as the smaller regional parties – that had caused a split of votes to help BJP win thrice in the past – were losing ground".

Raman Singh

While Dr. Singh said that his statement was misconstrued, the Congress said that it was a tacit acknowledgement of the fact that compared to it, the BJP had no standing in the State.

Cabinet Minister and senior Congress leader Ravindra Choubey said that Dr. Singh's "statement" was a warning to the BJP. Mr. Choubey said, "We have been saying all along that these parties have been acting as a B-Team of the BJP. By making such a statement, he has only acknowledged that without the veiled support of such parties, the BJP is considerably weaker compared to the Congress in Chhattisgarh."

Vote share

"My statements have been misconstrued and the Congress's public relations cell is behind such news stories. The issues that have been discussed on our party's forum are very clear that there was a need to work harder and I had said that we had bigger goals and needed to increase our vote share from the existing 37% to 51%," Dr. Singh said.

He was backed by his party colleague and BJP State president Vishnudeo Sai. "What he [Dr. Singh] said was that we would need 51% seat share in the Assembly if we had to script a comeback and for that a vote share of around 51% would be needed," he said.

Both the leaders, while acknowledging the need to increase vote share, steered clear of addressing questions on the BJP gaining from a third player – the Nationalist Congress Party, the Gondwana Ganatantra Party, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) or the Janata Congress Chhattisgarh (JCC).

In the 90-member Chhattisgarh Assembly, the Congress has now 71 members, the BJP 14, while the remaining five seats are shared between the BSP and the JCC.

Responding to his party's prospects in light of the statement attributed to Dr. Singh, JCC President Amit Jogi said that such statements were misinformed. "The last time the BJP formed a government was in 2013 whereas we debuted in 2018...If anything, had it not been for us, the BJP would have suffered a worse rout than it did in 2018," he said.

Cong. to focus on 'fair economy'

Party's poll pitch to include urban jobs guarantee, allowances for home-makers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

An urban employment guarantee Act on the lines of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA); an allowance for home-makers; an education allowance for children completing school on a need-cum-merit basis; a complete fee waiver for applicants to government jobs; a law to regulate employment of domestic help; and free legal aid to working/self-employed women could be some of the Congress' key election ideas going ahead, after the party argued for a reset of economic policies at its Udaipur Nav Sankalp *chintar shivir* earlier this month.

Ideas meet: Congress president Sonia Gandhi with party leaders at the *Chintan Shivir* held recently in Udaipur. • PTI

The Ashok Gehlot-led government in election-bound Rajasthan already announced an urban job scheme last week to guarantee 100 days of urban employment with a plan outlay of ₹800 crore.

The scheme is on the lines of a proposal mooted by the party's panel on economics, headed by former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram, that prepared the Nav Sankalp Economic Policies (NSEP) document to outline the party's economic priorities at the Udaipur conclave.

The Congress as well as other Opposition parties have been trying to corner the Narendra Modi government on its handling of economic issues such as employment, inflation and privatisation.

The NSEP document notes that Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) has fallen to 40.38%, unemployment rate has risen to 7.83%, and jobless growth has become a legacy of the Modi government.

"The Congress Party promises to return the Indian economy to the path of 8-9 per cent growth marked by ever-growing employment. The NSEP will aim to build a fair, just and equal economy and bring opportunity and prosperity to all sections of the people," notes the document.

The Congress document reads: "A reset of economic policies must reiterate the advantages of an open market economy, support wealth creation, and accelerate growth driven by the private sector and a viable public sector. The cornerstone of the Nav Sankalp Economic Policy (NSEP) will be jobs."

"The NSEP must recognise the key role of farmers and promise maximum freedom to them to grow, market and export their produce. The NSEP must also recognize that industry and services will be mainly driven by the private sector's investment and risk-taking. The NSEP must unambiguously embrace the virtues of aspiration, innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship," the resolution adds.

Explaining the emphasis on the Congress's economic policies, Gourav Vallabh, who was a member of the panel that prepared the document for the Udaipur conclave, told *The Hindu* that the debate is about the economics of equity versus crony capitalism.

"The income levels of 97% of the Indian population is coming down. Whether you look at the Oxfam report or the CMIE (Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy), there is a growing disparity that we need to address," he said.

The economic revival plan not only reaffirms the party's commitment to minimum income support or NYAY (*nyuntam aay yojana*) that the Congress had promised in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls but talks of expanded welfare measures to counter the impact of inflation. These include an allowance for women home-makers who do unremunerated work for many hours of a day; higher financial support to *anganwadis* and to the mid-day meal scheme to combat malnutrition among children; social security and insurance to workers in the unorganised sector including the self-employed; and a separate law to regulate the work of domestic help and migrant workers.

RLD meeting today to demand caste census

Oppn. party members to take part

ANUJ KUMAR
NEW DELHI

In a bid to bring different Opposition parties on a common platform on social issues, the Rashtriya Lok Dal will hold a conference at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi on Sunday to mark the 35th death anniversary of former Prime Minister Chaudhary Charan Singh.

Chaudhary Jayant Singh

According to an official release, the conference will focus on the establishment of a Social Justice Commission, tasked with ensuring equal opportunities for communities that have been disempowered.

"Another important agenda of the conference is the demand for a caste census," RLD national spokesperson Sandeep Chaudhary said.

Mr. Chaudhary said the census should be undertaken immediately to enable targeted affirmative action to uplift the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Socially and Economically Backward Classes.

Apart from RLD president Chaudhary Jayant Singh, the speakers at the conference include Meghalaya Governor Satya Pal Malik, who has been vocal against the government on different issues; senior Samajwadi Party leader Ram Gopal Yadav; Mukhendu Shekhar Roy of the Trinamool Congress; K.C. Tyagi of the Janata Dal(U); Danish Ali of the Bahujan Samaj Party and Manoj Jha of the Rashtriya Janta Dal.

On the political meaning of the conference, coming at a time when efforts for the revival of the Third Front are being carried out in different States, Mr. Chaudhary said it was for the political observers to figure out. "When hate is being pushed as a political agenda, it is an attempt to bring political rivals on a common social platform," Mr. Chaudhary said. On the absence of Congress leaders, Mr. Chaudhary said the party was "not anti-Congress and one of the leaders from Haryana might make it to the conference".

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY e-Tender Notice

Tender No.: **13/2022-2023/KWA/ PHC/TVLA** JJM: - Augmentation of WTP at Malankavu, Construction of OH Tank, Supply & erection of pumpsets, Laying pumping mains & Distribution system and providing 4530 FHTCs in Kadampanadu Panchayath. EMD: **₹5,00,000.** Tender fee: **₹16,800**
Last date for submitting tender: **21-06-2022, 02:00 pm.** Ph: **04692600162**
Website: **www.kwa.kerala.gov.in, www.etenders.kerala.gov.in**
KWA-JB-GL-6-277-2022-23 **Superintending Engineer,** PH Circle, Pathanamthitta

SOUTHERN RAILWAY
CONSTRUCTION ORGANISATION
E-Tender
Tender Notice No.CAO-CN-MS-EPC-SD-01-2022 Dated 25.05.2022
Tender Notice No.CAO-CN-MS-EPC-SD-02-2022 Dated 25.05.2022
Tender Notice No.CAO-CN-MS-EPC-SD-03-2022 Dated 26.05.2022
Tender Notice No.CAO-CN-MS-EPC-SD-04-2022 Dated 26.05.2022
Tender Notice No.CAO-CN-MS-CON-SD-01-2022 Dated 25.05.2022
For and on behalf of The President of India, The Chief Engineer, Construction, Southern Railway, Egmore, Chennai - 600 008 invites e-tender for the following work(s) as per Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) in our portal **www.ireps.gov.in** The tenderers / Contractors intending to apply for the tender needs to get enrolled in the portal **www.ireps.gov.in** and only online tenders will be accepted.

Name of the work
Major Upgradation / Redevelopment of PONDICHERRY Railway station
Major Upgradation / Redevelopment of MADURAI Railway station
Major Upgradation / Redevelopment of RAMESWARAM Station
Major Upgradation / Redevelopment of KATPADI Railway Station
Consultancy Services for Feasibility Study, Detailed Master Planning, Urban Designing, Engineering & Preparation of Detailed Project (DPR) for Major Upgradation (Integrated Re-development) KUMBAKKONAM Railway station of Tiruchchirappalli Division of Southern Railway.

Cash Value (Rupees)	Earnest Money Deposit (Rupees)	Period of Completion	Closing Date @ 15.00 Hrs.	Pre Bid Conference Date @ 11.00 Hrs.
700000000.00	3500000.00	24 Months	21.07.2022	09.06.2022
3586300000.00	17931500.00	26 Months	25.07.2022	10.06.2022
977900000.00	4889500.00	18 Months	25.07.2022	10.06.2022 @15.00Hrs.
3234900000.00	16174500.00	36 Months	02.08.2022	21.06.2022
6054000.00	121100.00	240 Days	28.06.2022	06.06.2022

For further details, please refer to web site portal **www.ireps.gov.in** or contact Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, Construction, E.V.R.High Road, Egmore, Chennai - 600 008.
Chief Engineer (Construction), Egmore, Chennai - 600 008.
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SOUTHERN RAILWAY
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM DIVISION - ELECTRICAL BRANCH
E-Tender Notice No.V-EG-OT-03-2022-2023 Dt. 26.05.2022
Name of work : TVC Division : Replacement of over aged & obsolete interlocking arrangements with electronic interlocking at Kumbalam, Thuravur, Cherthala, Mararikulam & Alappuzha (5 stations) in Ernakulam - Alappuzha - Kayamkulam - Electrical arrangement.
Approximate value : Rs.77,76,889/-
Bid Security : Rs.155500/-
Date of opening : 17.06.2022
Complete details & tender document will be available at www.ireps.gov.in
Sr. DEE/G/TVC.
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GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER:: PWD BUILDING::
ASSAM::GUWAHATI-3
No. CE/BLDG/ ARC-II/91/2022/02

PRESS NOTICE

The Chief Engineer, P.W.D (Building), Assam, on behalf of the Governor of Assam invites Bids for Technical & Financial offer as per Request for Proposal from qualified and experienced firms (criteria as per in RFP document) for providing "Project Management Consultancy Services" for the following work:

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Approx. Value of the project put to Tender (in Rs.)
1.	PMC services for "Development of Batadrava Than as Cultural and Tourist Destination at Batadrava, Nagaon, Assam (Phase-II)"	Rs. 9910.60107 Lakh

- The details may be seen in e-procurement portal i.e. www.assamtenders.gov.in
- The Work Order will be issued after receipt of Administrative Approval from Government.
- The validity period of the Bid shall be 180 days from the date of submission of bid.
- The Bidders must be registered with the E-tendering system (ETS) of the Govt. of Assam. (website: http/ /assamtenders.gov.in)
- The Chief Engineer P.W.D (Building), Assam reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals without showing any reasons what so ever.

Chief Engineer, PWD (Bldg.), Assam,Chandmari, Guwahati-3.
Janasanyog /C/3365/22

ATAL INCUBATION CENTRE
Central Coffee Research Institute (AIC- CCRI- CED)
कॉफी बोर्ड
COFFEE BOARD
(Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Govt. of India)
No.1, Dr. Ambedkar Veedhi, Bengaluru - 560001
Supported by AIM
NOTIFICATION- VIKRAYAM TRAINING PROGRAMME
No. AIC-CCRI-CED/BLR/2022-23/49 **Date: 29.05.2022**
AIC CCRI CED (Business Incubator of Coffee Board of India) invites applications for online **VIKRAYAM- Export Training Programme for aspiring Entrepreneurs and Exporters.** For more details contact 080 - 22266910 or visit **aicccriced.in/indiacoffee.org.** Please use the link for registration: https://forms.gle/LkGVczhZM3QW46e9A. **Registrations open from 26th May 2022 till 15th June 2022.**
CEO, AIC CCRI CED

SBI STATE BANK OF INDIA
PREMISES & ESTATE DEPARTMENT, LOCAL HEAD OFFICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, KERALA- 695012
TENDER NOTICE FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION AND SELECTION OF PROJECT ARCHITECT FOR PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF RESIDENTIAL QUARTERS AT KOZHIKODE
State Bank of India invites tenders in two cover system (Technical and Price bid) for prequalification and selection of Principal Project Architect cum Project Management Consultant (PPA cum PMC) for the proposed construction of residential quarters at Kozhikode.
The prequalification criteria, scope of the services to be offered, terms and conditions of appointment and the detailed proforma etc. for submission of tenders (Technical and Price Bid) for the purpose can be downloaded from our website **https://sbi.co.in/web/sbi-in-the-news/procurement-news**. The last date for submission of duly filled in tenders in the prescribed format at this office will be up to **3.00 pm on 29-06-2022.**
Place: Thiruvananthapuram
Date: 29-05-2022
Assistant General Manager (P&E)

IFAD Investing in rural people
Rural Enterprise Acceleration Project (REAP)
Uttarakhand Gramya Vikas Samiti (UGVS)
Rural Development Department, Uttarakhand
216, PanditWari _II, Dehradun, 248007, Ph:- 0135-2774800
Letter No: 151/ 2022-23 Date :28.05.2022
Request for Expression of Interest (EoI) for hiring of agency for Base Line Survey of the REAP Project
Reference No. EoI/ 01/2022-23
The UGVS, through Government of Uttarakhand has received financing from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) towards the cost of REAP and intends to apply part of the proceeds for the recruitment of consulting services. The use of any IFAD financing shall be subject to IFAD's approval, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the financing agreement, as well as IFAD's rules, policies and procedures. IFAD and its officials, agents and employees shall be held harmless from and against all suits, proceedings, claims, demands, losses and liability of any kind or nature brought by any party in connection with REAP
The consulting services ("the services") include: Hiring of agency for base line survey of REAP project. The UGVS ("the client") now invites eligible consulting firms ("consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the services. Expression of Interest is invited online through www.uktenders.gov.in. Interested consultants may download EoI document and apply online through website: www.uktenders.gov.in.
A consultant will be selected in accordance with the QCBS method set out in IFAD' project procurement handbook that can be accessed via the IFAD website at www.ifad.org/project-procurement. The date of publication of the EoI on www.uktenders.gov.in is 01-06-2022 at 10:00 AM. The last date of submission of REoI through www.uktenders.gov.in is 30th June till 2:00 PM.
Project Director, UGVS-REAP

For meritorious J&K, Ladakh students, an extended run for scholarship scheme

PMSSS was introduced by Congress-led UPA government in 2011 to provide funds to 5,000 students and promote job opportunities in the erstwhile State

VIJAITA SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Union government has extended a scholarship scheme from the United Progressive Alliance era for students from Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh for another five years in the wake of the encouraging response it has received. The government wants to continue the scholarship along with a simultaneous focus on opening new educational institutes in the newly created Union Territories.

The Prime Minister's Special Scholarship Scheme (PMSSS) was introduced by the Congress-led UPA government in 2011 to provide funding to 5,000 meritorious students each year to study in private and government educational institutions across the country. Aimed at promoting employment opportunities for students from J&K and Ladakh, the scheme, with an annual budget of ₹180 crore to ₹190 crore, is implemented by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

According to AICTE data, there was a substantial increase in the number of applications received in the academic years 2020-21 and 2021-22, following a dip in 2018-19 and 2019-20. The rise was recorded after J&K's special status granted under Article 370 of the Constitution was revoked by Parliament in August 2019.

Future propects: The scheme offers 4,500 seats for general education courses and 250 seats each for engineering and medical courses. •NISSAR AHMAD

Anil D. Sahasrabudhe, Chairman, AICTE, told *The Hindu* that the term of the scheme was due to end last year, but the Centre decided to extend it for another five years for the benefit of students.

Mr. Sahasrabudhe said the scheme offers 4,500 seats for general education courses (Bachelor's in Arts, Commerce and Science), and 250 each for engineering and medical degrees. While the scholarship offered for general education courses is ₹1.3 lakh, including a ₹1 lakh maintenance fee to cover hostel and mess charges, it is ₹2.25 lakh for engineering and ₹4 lakh for medical degrees.

'Few takers'

"There are not many takers for general education seats. When these seats are not filled, they are converted on a pro rata basis into engineering and medical seats, raising the 500-seat limit. The ₹1 lakh maintenance fee is common for all courses. So, three unoccupied general education seats are equivalent to one medical seat and 1.8 engineering seats," Mr. Sahasrabudhe said. He added that the conversion rate is different each year and that is why all 5,000 seats are never filled.

SPECIAL

However, data showed that in the past six years, the 250 allotted medical seats were not filled. In 2020-21, only 113 students joined the medical stream through the PMSSS. In 2019-20, only 95 students opted for medicine under the scheme.

While there were 25,970 and 24,455 applicants for the scholarship in 2020-21 and 2021-22, respectively, and 23,234 and 22,538 of them met the eligibility criteria, only 4,780 and 4,095 students finally joined colleges under the scheme.

Opting out

He said the reasons for students opting out of the scheme include securing admission in a college of their choice in J&K or Ladakh, feeling homesick, and concerns over the language barrier. However, he said such seats do not remain vacant as they are opened for diploma holders in the following academic year. "If after Class 10, a student has pursued a diploma, then he or she may gain admission directly to the second year of engineering," Mr. Sahasrabudhe said.

Savarkar movie: first look is out

ANUJ KUMAR
NEW DELHI

The makers of biopic *Swatantra Veer Savarkar* released the first look of the Hindutva icon from the film on the occasion of the birth anniversary.

Starring Randeep Hooda in the lead role, the film, directed by Mahesh Manjrekar, will go on floors in August and is expected to release by December 2023. While social media was abuzz with comments on the striking similarity between Mr. Hooda and Savarkar, producer Sandeep Singh told *The Hindu* that "when there could be films on Dawood Ibrahim, Harshad Mehta and Lalit Modi, why should we not celebrate a freedom fighter?"

In the past, the prolific producer has made PM Narendra Modi, released just after the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, as the Election Commission stopped its release before the election. Mr. Singh is now working on a film on Nathuram Godse.

Mr. Singh further said if telling the true story of Savarkar was propaganda, he certainly was. "If telling the story of somebody who urged his countrymen to unite is propaganda, I am definitely making a propaganda film," he said, adding he has also produced films like *Jhund*.

NCB arrests Nigerian, 7 others in drug case; seizes 35 kg of heroin

Three women suspects from African countries have been detained

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Saturday claimed to have busted a major drug trafficking network with the arrest of eight persons, one of them a Nigerian national, and seizure of 34.89 kg of heroin. Three women suspects from African countries have been detained.

The Nigerian national, who had been running the alleged syndicate from Delhi and identified as the "kingpin", has been arrested from Delhi. "The network was unearthed in a joint operation by the Delhi, Indore and Bengaluru zonal units, coordinated by the officials at NCB headquarters," an official said.

Based on inputs, officials of the NCB, Bengaluru, seized seven kg of heroin, which was concealed in the false bottom of a suitcase of one woman passenger coming from Zimbabwe to Bengaluru by flight at the Kempegowda International Airport on May 24. She was held along with her woman associate.

Illegal substance: Heroin concealed in a suitcase seized by the NCB on Saturday. •@NARCOTICSBUREAU

During the interrogation, the women disclosed that a similar bag had been kept at a lodge where they were staying. Subsequent searches led to the seizure of 6.89 kg of heroin concealed in the bag. Further probe into the network revealed that three more women passengers carrying similar consignments had boarded the Rajdhani Express in Bengaluru for Delhi.

The NCB worked on the technical intelligence, zeroed in on carriers and found that they had got down near Itarsi in Madhya Pradesh. Following the leads, the Indore zonal team seized 21 kg of contraband from three trolley bags and arrested the three women from a lodge.

In a simultaneous operation, the handlers of the carriers were identified and intercepted at the Bengaluru airport. They told the agency that a Nigerian national operating from Delhi was the kingpin of the syndicate. Accordingly, the accused was arrested and three more women associates were detained.

Further investigation revealed that the Nigerian accused had married an Indian national through whom he would rope in carriers. They would be sent to Africa to get the contraband, for which they were paid commissions per trip. "The kingpin would arrange corporate tickets and pay for other travel aspects of the carriers. Further probe may result in more arrests and seizures in the case are likely," a senior official said.

Shaunak's *All That Breathes* grabs Cannes Golden Eye award

Film is about two brothers taking care of migratory birds

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CANNES

Shaunak Sen's "All That Breathes", an audience favourite here from the outset, won the 2022 *L'Oeil d'Or* (Golden Eye) for the best documentary at the 75th Cannes Film Festival on Saturday, making it two in succession for India.

"All That Breathes" is about two Delhi brothers Nadeem and Saud who, amid the city's worsening air and deteriorating social fabric, devote their lives to saving migratory black kites that are at the mercy of mankind's unthinking ways. The film was screened as part of the festival's Special Screenings line-up.

The award was announced by a jury chaired by veteran Polish filmmaker Agnieszka Holland.

The citation read: "The 2022 *L'Oeil d'Or* goes to a film that, in a world of destruction, reminds us that every life matters, and every small action matters. You can grab your camera, you can save a bird, you can hunt for some moments of stealing beauty, it matters." The citation described All That Breathes as "an inspirational journey in observation of three Don Quijotes who may not save the whole world but do save their world." Sen's win is India's second in Cannes in two years. In 2021, Payal Kapadia's *"A Night of Knowing Nothing"*, which played in the parallel *Semaine de la Critique* (Cannes Critics' Week) took home the L'Oeil d'Or. "All That Breathes" was competing with ace Chilean documentarian Patricio Guzman's *"MyImaginary Country"*, Ethan Coen's *"Jerry Lee Lewis: Trouble in Mind"* and Sergei Loznitsa's *"The Natural History of Destruction"*, among other films.

Shaunak Sen. •REUTERS

Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur on Saturday congratulated filmmaker Shaunak Sen for winning the 2022 *L'Oeil d'Or* (Golden Eye) for the best documentary at the 75th Cannes Film Festival.

"Congratulations to Indian filmmaker Shaunak Sen for the conferment of *'L'Oeil d'Or'* award for his documentary *'All That Breathes'* at Cannes Film Festival. I am sure, this will inspire other Indian documentary makers to make it big on the world stage," he tweeted.

Govt. to develop framework to curb fake e-commerce reviews

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The government on Saturday said it will develop a framework to keep a check on fake reviews posted on e-commerce websites to protect consumer interest.

The Consumer Affairs Ministry, along with the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), held a virtual meeting on Friday with stakeholders, including e-commerce entities, to discuss the magnitude of fake reviews on their platforms. Fake reviews mislead consumers into buying online products and services.

According to an official statement, the Department of Consumer Affairs will develop these frameworks after studying the present mechanism being followed by the e-commerce entities in India and best practices available globally.

Consumer fora, law universities, lawyers, FICCI, CII and consumer rights activists participated in the meeting.

Since e-commerce involves a virtual shopping experience without any opportunity to physically view or examine the product, consumers heavily rely on reviews posted on platforms to see the opinion and experience of users who have already purchased the product or service.

Men face sex selection cases in Odisha

SATYASUNDAR BARIK
BHUBANESWAR

A day after 13 persons were arrested on charges of their involvement in determination of the sex of foetus in Ganjam district of Odisha, the Berhampur police on Saturday turned the heat on the men who took their wives to the illegal centre.

"We have identified 11 men who were with their wives at the illegal sex selection centre. They will be proceeded against under the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994," Saravana Vivek M., Superintendent of Police, Berhampur, told *The Hindu* on Saturday.

"We deliberately let husbands go from the spot as their arrest could have triggered a commotion. We did not want to put pregnant women under any kind of mental trauma. However, these men have already been identified and made part of the investigation," Mr. Vivek said.

The police also came to know that husbands of some of the pregnant women got the foetuses aborted upon finding that they were of female sex. The police would go after these men too.

"This is a complicated case. We want to approach the case diligently and make it foolproof. People providing service of sex selection are not the only culprits. Husbands and family members of pregnant women are equally responsible," he said.

For the first time in the enforcement of the PCPNDT Act in Odisha, the police have caught red-handed so many people including the operator of the centre, the husbands, middlemen and a quack.

One accredited social health activist (ASHA), Rina Pradhan (40), of Bhikapada village in the Khalikote police station limits was arrested for taking a pregnant woman for sex selection.

Durga Prasad Nayak, the prime accused, has been running the illegal sex selection centre for two or three years, the police said. Involvement of a large number of people cannot be ruled out.

SUDOKU

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

6	7	4	2	3	1	8	5	9
1	2	9	5	8	7	3	4	6
5	3	8	4	9	6	2	1	7
2	6	1	7	5	8	4	9	3
8	4	3	1	2	9	7	6	5
7	9	5	6	4	3	1	2	8
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Heritage to sustainability, UN-Habitat lays out plan for Pink City

Interventions for mitigating urban sprawl include increasing green cover, urban biodiversity and better transport facility

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

Posing a challenge for urban planners, UN-Habitat has identified multi-hazard vulnerabilities, urban sprawl, weak urban mobility and "green-blue disconnect" as the pressing issues for Jaipur city.

Though Rajasthan's capital has received a high sustainability rating, government agencies have their task cut out to deal with the city's expansion.

The global body has based its findings on a sustainable cities integrated approach pilot project, as part of which the "sustainable urban planning and management" component was implemented in collaboration with the Jaipur Development Authority and Jaipur Greater Municipal Corporation.

Sustainability Rating

Jaipur has received an overall sustainability rating of three on the Urban Sustainability Assessment Framework (USAF) on the basis of data collected for 87 of its 131 parameters. Experts have identified urban sectors where the city needs to pay maximum attention, and made recommendations to increase its green cover, strengthen urban biodiversity, and enhance the quality of life for citizens.

UN-Habitat's city coordinator Ankit Gupta told *The Hindu* that a few critical issues related to the city's urban development had been identified to propose strategic interventions and promote sustainable development.

The project has received funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF-6) to estimate the carbon sequestration potential of Indian cities.

Mitigating urban sprawl remains a major challenge in the State capital, with the UN body emphasising the concept of a compact city with re-development and re-densification of the existing urban areas.

Urban development: Jawaharlal Nehru Marg with the World Trade Park visible in the background. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

As an indirect measure to curb development on the city's outskirts, linking the distance from the main city to the development charges imposed on citizens could be considered.

Better facility

Mr. Gupta said that since the city had weak access to a public transportation system, with less number of buses and poor route delineation, fare integration for different modes of transport would make movement convenient, and reduce traffic and vehicle emissions. Non-motorised transport infrastructure should also be strengthened in the city, he said.

The project found that there are about 800 dry wells in Jaipur's Walled City that could be used as rainwater harvesting structures.

This would raise the water table, mitigate urban floods and ensure efficient utilisation of water resources, as Jaipur has been facing extreme cases of drought during summer as well as urban floods, according to the project's findings.

New proposals

In order to increase green cover and promote biodiversity, "eco-trails" have been proposed across the city, with plantation along natural drainage channels and railway tracks.

Interestingly, Jaipur's urban greenery is concentrated towards the city centre with the Central Park, Ram Niwas Garden, Deer Park and Golf Club situated there, while newly developed areas lack green cover, generating the urban heat island effect and disrupting biodiversity.

Consultation necessary

Architecture and planning expert Nand Kumar said at a stakeholders' consultation organised by UN-Habitat here that town planners should develop a model to demonstrate to the people and the government how the issues in achieving sustainability could be tackled and urban greenery expanded.

Tourism & Wildlife Society of India (TWSI) secretary Harsh Vardhan said the authorities should start quantifying oxygen produced and carbon dioxide released daily in each urban complex to plan for raising new greens. Urban development should not just embrace cement-steel structures, he added.

Mr. Vardhan said the next crucial aspect would be the selection of floral species for urban areas, as only indigenous, broad-leaved and tap-root trees would produce more shade and oxygen for the city residents.

"Urban bodies grossly undermine such species and instead plant exotic vegetation, which tends to be unhealthy for the citizens," he said.

Ukraine hints at retreating from east

Zelensky says the situation is difficult, hopes to turn around the battle with more arms from the West

REUTERS
KYIV/POPASNA

Ukrainian forces may have to retreat from their last pocket in the Luhansk region to avoid being captured, a Ukrainian official said, as Russian troops press an advance in the east that has shifted the momentum of the three-month-old war.

A withdrawal could bring Russian President Vladimir Putin closer to his goal of capturing eastern Ukraine's Luhansk and Donetsk regions, collectively known as the Donbas, in full.

Luhansk's Governor, Serhiy Gaidai, said Russian troops had entered Sievierodonetsk, the largest city in Donbas still held by Ukraine. "We will have enough strength and resources to defend ourselves. However, it is possible that in order not to be surrounded, we will have to retreat," Mr. Gaidai said.

Russia's separatist proxies said they controlled Lyman, a railway hub west of Sievierodonetsk. Ukraine said Russia had captured most of Lyman but that its forces were blocking an advance to Sloviansk, to the southwest.

Ruined city: Emergency workers disassembling a destroyed building in Mariupol on Friday. • AP

President Volodymyr Zelensky reiterated that the situation in the east was "difficult" but expressed confidence his country would prevail with help from Western weapons and sanctions. "If the occupiers think that Lyman or Sievierodonetsk will be theirs, they are wrong. Donbas will be Ukrainian," he said.

The Kremlin said Mr. Putin held an telephone call on Saturday with the leaders of France and Germany, in which he warned against supplying Western arms to Ukraine and blamed the conflict's disruption to global food supplies on Western sanctions.

Analysts at the Institute for the Study of War, a U.S.-based think tank, said while Russian forces had begun direct assaults on built-up areas of Sievierodonetsk, they would likely struggle to take ground in the city itself.

"Russia has performed poorly in operations in built-up urban terrain throughout the war," they said.

Russian troops advanced after piercing Ukrainian lines last week in the city of Popasna, south of Sievierodonetsk. Russian ground forces have captured several villages northwest of Popasna, Britain's Defence Ministry said.

Dangers of escalation

Western countries led by the U.S. have provided Ukraine with long-range weaponry, including M777 howitzers and Harpoon anti-ship missiles, from Denmark.

Washington is even considering providing Kyiv with a rocket system with a range of hundreds of kilometres, and has held talks with Kyiv about the danger of escalation if it strikes deep inside Russia, U.S. and diplomatic officials said.

(With inputs from AP)

Russia tests Zircon missile

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MOSCOW

Russia on Saturday successfully tested Zircon hypersonic cruise missile. The missile was fired from the Admiral Gorshkov frigate stationed in the Barents Sea and hit a target stationed 1,000 km away in the White Sea in the Arctic, the Defence Ministry said. The first official Zircon test was carried out in October 2020.

Thousands rally in Colombo to mark 50th day of protests

President Gotabaya shows no inclination to resign from office

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

Thousands participated in a rally held in capital Colombo on Saturday to mark the 50th day of ongoing agitations against the government at the oceanfront in the wake of a severe economic crisis.

Stir continues: The police using tear gas to disperse anti-government protesters in Colombo on Saturday. • AFP

Professionals, artistes, students, members of trade unions and the clergy marched about 3 km to Colombo's seafront where demonstrators have been protesting against the government for almost two months now. Police on Saturday used tear gas to disperse protesters marching to the President's office.

Citizens' protests started several months ago in different parts of the island, as Sri Lanka's economic crisis, triggered by a balance of payments problem, intensified. Due to the dollar crunch, the government is struggling to pay for essential imports, leaving citizens amid acute shortages of food, fuel and LPG cylinders. The protests intensified on April 9, with some demonstrators setting up a tent city adjacent to the President's office, where they began protesting day and night. They named their agitation site 'Gota go gama' or Gota go village, after their chief demand that President Gotabaya Rajapaksa resign for his "failed" response to the crisis. "The government thinks they can fool us by just reshuffling the pack, but the struggle will go on. We need Gotabaya to go home," said a protester.

Diverse support

The anti-government protests in Sri Lanka have drawn citizens from very diverse backgrounds. A group that was part of Saturday's rally held a big banner demanding justice for the families of forcibly disappeared persons. Another group chanted slogans, including "No gas, no light, no petrol, no diesel." Although the crowds at the protests have thinned, some demonstrators have been agitating relentlessly, even after facing violence earlier this month at the hands of Rajapaksa supporters, who stormed the area and assaulted peaceful demonstrators. The May 9 incident set off a day of violent, retaliatory attacks by angry citizens targeting homes of Minsters and MPs.

Former Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa stepped down the same day, and the Cabinet was dissolved. Some of the demonstrators have been named as witnesses in the investigation into the attacks. They have been barred from overseas travel. Protesters described Saturday's rally as a "boost" to continue agitating.

Despite public resistance, President Gotabaya shows no inclination to quit, the government has seen other key changes after citizens' protests began spreading, including Mr. Mahinda's resignation, the formation of a new Cabinet, with the appointment of Ranil Wickremesinghe as Prime Minister.

However, demonstrators are not convinced that Mr. Wickremesinghe's appointment heralds political stability for the country or a swift solution that would arrest the economic downturn. Several protesters held banners that read "No deal", a now-popular expression of resistance to the Prime Minister, whose critics accuse of him of "protecting the Rajapaksas". A few demonstrators have set up tents outside his official residence and called the spot 'No deal gama', or No deal village.

Several foreign missions, notably the U.S., have expressed willingness to work with Mr. Wickremesinghe, but not all Sri Lankans see him as a leader who can deliver solutions.

Actor and activist Peter D'Almeida, called the appointment a "treachery". "It is an undemocratic appointment, he has only one seat in Parliament... What kind of democracy are we talking about? He has put the same people back in Cabinet positions. They are the people who brought this country to ruin, and they are still in power," he said.

Meanwhile, citizens are facing enormous hardships – they spend long hours in queues for fuel, while coping with skyrocketing prices of essentials.

ELSEWHERE

Japanese Red Army founder freed from jail

TOKYO

Fusako Shigenobu, the 76-year-old female founder of the once-feared Japanese Red Army, walked free from prison on Saturday after completing a 20-year sentence for a 1974 Embassy siege. Shigenobu was one of the world's most notorious women during the 1970s and 1980s, when her radical leftist group carried out armed attacks worldwide in support of the Palestinian cause. AP

After Texas killings, Trump rejects gun control

'The existence of evil in our world is not a reason to disarm law-abiding citizens'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
HOUSTON

Former U.S. President Donald Trump rejected calls for tightened gun controls on Friday following the Texas school massacre, saying decent Americans should be allowed the firearms they need to defend themselves against "evil."

Donald Trump

"The existence of evil in our world is not a reason to disarm law-abiding citizens... The existence of evil is one of the very best reasons to arm law-abiding citizens," he told members of the National Rifle Association.

Mr. Trump's remarks came as he headlined an NRA event in Houston, three days after a gun massacre at a Texas elementary school reignited the tinderbox debate about US gun control.

"The various gun control policies being pushed by the left would have done nothing to prevent the horror that took place. Absolutely nothing," he said.

An 18-year-old gunman with a legally-bought AR-15-style rifle killed 19 children and two adults at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, on Tuesday, marking the deadliest school shooting in the state's history.

Mr. Trump read out the names of all 19 children, whom he described as victims of an out-of-control "lunatic," before suggesting that efforts at gun control were "grotesque."

"All of us must unite, Republican and Democrat – in every state, and at every level of government – to finally harden our schools and protect our children... What we need now is a top-to-bottom security overhaul at schools across this country," he added.

Multiple speakers, including Texas Governor Greg Abbott, pulled out of the event after the murders. However, Mr. Trump confirmed on Wednesday he would not be canceling his appearance at the NRA's annual meet.

President Joe Biden, who upbraided the gun lobby in the wake of the shootings, is due in Uvalde on Sunday with First Lady Jill Biden to "grieve with the community," White House said.

U.S. issues sanctions targeting N. Korea

This comes after China, Russia vetoed UN push to sanction its ICBM launches

REUTERS
WASHINGTON

The United States on Friday imposed sanctions on two Russian banks, a North Korean company and a person it accused of supporting North Korea's weapons of mass destruction programme, increasing pressure on Pyongyang over its renewed ballistic missile launches.

The latest American move came a day after China and Russia vetoed a U.S.-led push to impose more United Nations sanctions on North Korea over its missile launches, publicly splitting the UN Security Council for the first time since it started punishing Pyongyang in 2006.

A woman watching a news report on North Korea's launch of three missiles in Seoul on Wednesday. • REUTERS

Sixth ICBM test

The vetoes came despite what the U.S. says was a sixth test of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) by North Korea this year and signs that Pyongyang is preparing to conduct its first nuclear test since 2017.

The U.S. Treasury Department in a statement said it targeted Air Koryo Trading Corp as well as Russian financial institutions the Far Eastern Bank and Bank Sputnik for contributing to procurement and revenue generation for organisations based in North Korea.

Washington also designated Jong Yong Nam, a Belarus-based representative of an organisation subordinate to the North Korea Second Academy of Natural Sciences (SANS), who Washington said has supported North Korean organisations linked to the development of ballistic missiles.

North Korea's mission to the United Nations in New York did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

"The U.S. will continue to implement and enforce existing sanctions while urging the DPRK (North Korea) to return to a diplomatic path and abandon its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles," the Treasury's Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, Brian Nelson, said.

China has been urging the United States to take action - including lifting some unilateral sanctions - to entice Pyongyang to resume talks stalled since 2019, after three failed summits between North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and then-U.S. President Donald Trump. The United States has said Pyongyang should not be rewarded.

Bachelet urges China to rethink Uighur policies

UN rights chief had visited Xinjiang

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIJING

The United Nations top human rights official said on Saturday that she raised concerns with Chinese officials about the impact of the broad application of counterterrorism and deradicalisation measures on the rights of Uighurs and other predominantly Muslim groups in China's Xinjiang region.

Michelle Bachelet, who visited Xinjiang as part of a six-day trip to China, said the visit was not an investigation but an opportunity to raise concerns with Chinese leaders and pave the way for more regular interactions to support China in fulfilling its obligations under international human rights law.

"It provides an opportunity for me to better understand the situation in China, but also for the authorities in China to better understand our concerns and to potentially rethink policies that we believe may impact negatively on human rights," she said on the final day of her trip.

It's uncertain whether China's ruling Communist Party, which has vehemently denied all reports of human rights violations in Xinjiang, would change its polices. Ms. Bachelet's measured words, while expected, will likely not sit well with activists and governments such as the U.S., which have been critical of her decision to visit Xinjiang.

26 people missing after ferry sinks in Indonesia

The vessel was carrying 43 people

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
JAKARTA

Twenty-six people were missing on Saturday after a ferry ran out of fuel and sank in bad weather off the coast of Indonesia, officials said. The country's search and rescue agency said the vessel was carrying 43 people when it capsized on Thursday in the Makassar Strait, the sea separating the islands of Sulawesi and Borneo.

News of the accident only reached officials on Saturday, the local head of search and rescue Djuanidi, who like many Indonesians goes by only one name, told AFP.

"Seventeen people have been rescued alive by two tugboats that were passing by. We have deployed a rescue team to search for the missing others," he said.

A group of 40 rescuers were at sea searching for survivors, Mr. Djuanidi added.

Marine accidents are common in Indonesia, a Southeast Asian archipelago of around 17,000 islands where safety standards are often lax.

Last week a ferry carrying more than 800 people ran aground in shallow waters off East Nusa Tenggara province and remained stuck for two days before being dislodged. No one was hurt.

In 2018 more than 150 people drowned when a ferry sank in one of the world's deepest lakes on Sumatra island.

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SNAPSHOTS

Finding pyramids
The southwest corner of the Amazon Basin was once the site of complex urban settlements built by the ancient civilisations. Researchers used a laser remote-sensing technology called lidar to map land inhabited by the Casarabe culture, which existed around AD500 to 1400, in what is now Bolivia.

Bird flu outbreak
There has been an unprecedented spread of the H5N1 strain of avian influenza in wild birds. The virus seems to be spreading in wild birds more easily than ever before. The infected wild birds then spread the virus around the world, posing a significant risk to vulnerable species, which makes the virus hard to contain.

Third limb
Parrots use their heads to propel themselves while climbing — an acrobatic feat that has not been witnessed in any other creature so far. The researchers, who have been studying this aspect, concluded that the parrot's head has been repurposed to function as a third limb — countering the idea that animals never have three limbs.

More acceptable?
Tomato plants that produce a precursor to vitamin D could one day provide an animal-free source of the crucial nutrient. As scientists did not insert new genes —they just switched one off, a mutation that could also have occurred naturally — these tomato plants will face fewer regulations in many countries.

Mistake of ignoring monkeypox outbreak in Nigeria

There are no clear answers to how humans are infected as the host animal has not been identified

R. PRASAD

Monkeypox was first reported in 1958 in laboratory monkeys and the first human case was reported in 1970 in a nine-month-old baby in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Nigeria reported its first case of monkeypox in humans in 1970 when one case was detected; there were two human cases of monkeypox in Nigeria in 1978. And after nearly four decades of not reporting any cases, monkeypox (West African clade) made a re-emergence in Nigeria in September 2017. From September 2017 to April 30, 2022, Nigeria has reported 558 cases, of which 231 have been laboratory confirmed. There have been dozens of confirmed cases each year in Nigeria since 2017 – 88 in 2017, 49 in 2018, 47 in 2019, eight in 2020, and 34 in 2021. There have been 15 confirmed cases between January 1 and April 30, 2022.

Based on epidemiological and clinical characteristics of 122 confirmed or probable cases of human monkeypox cases in Nigeria between September 22, 2017 and September 16, 2018, researchers found both primary zoonotic and human-to-human transmission. Two cases of healthcare-associated infection were recorded. Based on genome sequencing, the researchers found multiple introductions of the virus, and a single introduction along with human-to-human transmission in a prison facility. The results were published in the journal *The Lancet Infectious Diseases*.

Since the outbreak began in Nigeria in 2017 and prior to the latest outbreak in Europe and North America, there have been at least eight instances when monkeypox has been exported to countries outside Africa – the U.K., the U.S., Israel and Singapore. Like all diseases that are endemic only to Africa, the story repeats again. While efforts were made to prevent an outbreak in the non-endemic countries outside Africa, no serious international attempts were made to stop the outbreak in Nigeria nor study the virus characteristics.

According to *Stat News*, Dr. Chikwe Ihekweazu, the former director general of the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control had sought help to try to decipher what was going on with monkeypox but without success. While in 2003, the U.S. reported the first human case of monkeypox, the virus had only crossed the species barrier from rodents imported from Ghana to one person. Human-to-human transmission outside Africa was first reported in September 2018, when the monkeypox virus spread from a patient to a healthcare worker in the U.K.

Current outbreak

The current outbreak in Europe and North America is the first instance when large-scale human-to-human transmission has been reported outside Africa. The index case was a U.K. resident, who travelled to Nigeria on April 20 and returned on May 3; he was diagnosed with monkeypox on May 6, 2022. It has since spread to 219 people as of May 25 across 20 countries.

The wealthy nations are now waking up to the reality of monkeypox crossing international borders and causing outbreaks in countries where it is not endemic.

"Attention is only paid when certain diseases hit high-income countries – exemplifying our collective failure to properly address 'epidemic preparedness' and 'global health'. It also illustrates the double standard applied to how people's health is valued between wealthy countries and the rest of the world," Dr. Emmanuel Nakoune from Institut Pasteur Bangui, Central African Republic and Dr. Piero Olliaro from the Pandemic Sciences Institute, University of Oxford write in the *BMJ*.

There are no clear answers to how humans are infected as the host animal that behaves as a reservoir for the virus has not been identified in the wild. And how the virus spreads from animals to humans is not known.

Also, how many people, on average, will one infected person spread the virus to is unclear.

"There wasn't a lot of interest to support that work until now – sadly," Dr. Ihekweazu told *Stat News*. "It never really received the interest it needed to answer some of these questions."

The current outbreak appears to have spread primarily among men who have sex with men. The virus is not transmitted through semen or vaginal fluids but the skin-to-skin contact during sex can result in virus spread.

The draft genome sequences first posted by researchers in Portugal and then Belgium indicate that the virus circulating in Europe and North America belongs to the West African clade, which causes mild infection.

Low mutation rate

Till date over 15 monkeypox genomes have been sequenced. But the monkeypox virus has a lower mutation rate (about two mutations a year) compared to nearly 25 mutations in a year in the case of SARS-CoV-2 virus.

This is because monkeypox is a DNA virus unlike the SARS-CoV-2, which is an RNA virus.

The low mutation rate in DNA viruses is largely due to the differences in mechanisms which create the mutation as also proof-reading mechanisms utilised by the viruses.

"The mutation rates of monkeypox are not well known, but generally other pox viruses have a much lower mutation rate. But almost all outbreaks have been due to spillovers from animals, while sustained human-to-human transmission and sequences from such events are not widely available to accurately estimate the rates," says Dr. Vinod Scaria, a senior scientist at the Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (CSIR-IGIB).

Genome sequencing

Despite the low mutation rate, sequencing more genomes might be prudent particularly from a genetic epidemiology point of view.

According to Dr. Scaria, besides providing insights into emergence, genetic epidemiology helps in understanding evolution through surveillance and fine-trace contact networks.

"The former is still applicable, while even with the loss of resolution, the latter is still useful," he says.

Though one extra mutation has been found in the sequenced genomes, there is a need for more genome sequences and epidemiological insights to conclusively establish what this mutation indeed means. It is unlikely that the mutation has made the virus more transmissive, despite a large number of cases being reported.

This is because two rave parties in Spain and Belgium have turned out to be super-spreader events, resulting in cases being reported from many countries. It is yet unclear if the virus has acquired the ability of sustained transmission among humans.

"Many of the new cases seem to have come in people who do not have a travel history or known contact with one who has travelled. Still too early to state it is [due to] sustained human-to-human transmission," Dr. Scaria says.

Flying blind as monkeypox virus spreads in Europe

When the outbreak began in Nigeria in 2017, no serious international attempts were made to study the virus characteristics

Largest outbreak: Nigeria has reported 231 lab-confirmed monkeypox cases since 2017. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

- Nigeria reported 88 confirmed cases in 2017, 49 in 2018, 47 in 2019, eight in 2020, and 34 in 2021. There have been 15 confirmed cases between January 1 and April 30, 2022
- Between September 22, 2017 and September 16, 2018, researchers found both primary zoonotic and human-to-human transmission
- The current outbreak in Europe and North America is the largest human-to-human transmission outside Africa
- The index case was diagnosed in the U.K. on May 6, 2022. As of May 25, the virus has spread to 219 people across 20 countries
- The host animal is yet to be identified and how the virus spreads from animals to humans is not known. How many people, on average, will one infected person spread the virus to is unclear. The mutation rate of monkeypox is not well known
- The current outbreak appears to have spread primarily among men who have sex with men
- Two rave parties in Spain and Belgium have turned out to be super-spreader events, resulting in cases being reported from many countries

Nanobots dig deep to disinfect tooth

Dentists can control the movement of nanobots and take them to the site of the bacterial infection

JACOB KOSHY

Few things are as shorn of complexity as the root canal treatment so much so that the basic principles of performing them have been unchanged from the times Romans inserted bronze wires into their teeth to treat the infection.

Once the shooting pain has been diagnosed as being due to a bacterial infection within the tooth, the dentist drills a hole, scoops out the infected pulp, disinfects the tooth and fills the space with an antibacterial sealant like bleach or hydrogen peroxide.

The hope is that the job is thorough and the vanquished bacteria doesn't rejuvenate. Estimates from the United States suggest that of the 35 million dental procedures to treat a root canal, about 10% are failures.

A common cause of failure is that the underlying bacteria, usually *Enterococcus faecalis*, hasn't been completely eliminated paving the way for reinfections that can necessitate extracting the tooth.

The quest to deliver enough antibacterial agent to the depths of the tooth has in recent years seen extremely sophisticated, complex, cutting-edge approaches that make the conventional RCT appear not just pre-Roman but even Stone Age.

Laser therapy

Rather than the dentist's drill, a fine beam of light pushes an antibacterial deep into the tooth's passageway in this approach. Another is to use ultrasound waves to, again, make the antibacterial go deeper. Some early experiments with lasers attempted to do away with pushing antimicrobials altogether and use the heat from ultra-thin light beams to incinerate the bacteria.

Mechanism: Nanobots generate heat to kill the bacteria, leaving the surrounding healthy tissue undamaged, says Shanmukh Srinivas (middle). • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

But the equipment, expertise and the risk of harming healthy tissue makes these approaches a rarity, particularly in Indian dental clinics. But Theranautilus, a Bengaluru based start-up incubated at the Indian Institute of Science, aspires to go one up by employing nanotechnology. By deploying an army of so called 'nanobots', or tiny 'robots' that are helical crawlers made of silicon dioxide coated with iron, the aim is to have the bots move as close to where the bacteria abound.

The bots' movement can be controlled using a device that generates a low intensity magnetic field. In their tests, Theranautilus scientists injected these nanobots into extracted tooth samples and tracked their movement via a microscope. By manipulating the frequency of the magnetic field, the nanobots could be made to move at will, and penetrate deep inside the dentinal tubules. The dentist can control the movement of billions of these nanobots, each no more than 300 nanometres (1,000 times thinner than hair) and take them to the site of the bacterial infection. Working in tandem, these nanobots can generate enough heat to kill the bacteria but not damage surrounding healthy tissue, said Shanmukh Srinivas, a dentist and co-founder of the company.

A research report by Theranautilus scientists in the journal *Advanced Healthcare Materials* says that tests on mice revealed the use of nanobots as safe.

Towards clinical trials

Mr. Srinivas said that the next step ahead will be to test the device in people via clinical trials and the company is in the process of tying up with hospitals for the same. "Were everything to go to plan, we expect that this treatment will be available at the clinic in four-five years," he added.

Their research paper says that while nanobot-heat eliminated the bacteria, there was a possibility that some bacteria could remain and therefore the nanobots could even be used as drug delivery vehicles to transport antibacterial material.. The amount of silica in every dose of treatment was less than that in a pint of beer, according to Mr. Srinivas, and was extremely safe.

Rare bacteria discovered in Antarctica

REUTERS

A bacteria have been discovered in Antarctica with genes that give them natural antibiotic and antimicrobial resistance and have the potential to spread out of the polar regions, according to scientists in Chile.

Scientists from the University of Chile collected several samples from the Antarctic Peninsula from 2017 to 2019.

They found that the Pseudomonas bacteria, one of the predominant bacteria groups in the Antarctic Peninsula, are not pathogenic but can be a source of 'resistance genes', which are not stopped by common disinfectants such as copper, chlorine or quaternary ammonium.

What causes the painful, inflexible spine?

There are 364 joints in the vertebral column, and there are many possible ways in which things could go wrong

SPEAKING OF SCIENCE

D. BALASUBRAMANIAN

The vertebral column is important to the structure of your body, allowing you to stand erect, and to do yoga. This flexibility comes from 33 interlocked vertebrae. It is a marvel of evolutionary and engineering design, seeing us humans through feats involving stress and strain. Olympic-grade javelin throwers, 20 years after retiring from the grind of training and competitions, have no more back-related problems than the rest of us (*Bone & Joint Journal*).

The pain spectrum

A chiropractor will tell you that there are 364 joints in the vertebral column – there are many possible ways in which things could go wrong, resulting in back problems that cover the whole pain spectrum, from niggling to crippling.

An inflammation of the bones in the spine is called spondylitis. One severe, arthritic form of spondylitis is called ankylosing spondylitis (AS). The term 'ankylosing' refers to new bone formation leading to the cementing together of a set of adjacent vertebrae, usually in the lower back. Spondylitis is different from spondylosis, which is the wearing away of the vertebral column.

Ankylosing spondylitis is accompanied by the kind of lower back pain that worsens when you rest (which means the sufferer may wake up from sleep in pain). X-rays show clear signs of damage to the spine or to the joints that link the spine to the pelvis. Other parts of the body – the jaw, the ribcage, or even the heels – may hurt too. AS affects about 0.2% of the world's population.

Widespread: Ankylosing spondylitis is accompanied by a lower back pain. It hurts the jaw, the ribcage, or even the heels. • GETTY IMAGES

Your immune system responds to trouble – be it a bacterial infection or be it a fresh wound – by sending out inflammatory cells to the problematic site. This initiates an aggressive reaction aimed at overwhelming the bacteria, or starting the healing process. The acute response causes short-term pain and swelling, which subsides when the foreign invaders are overcome (or the wound is healed).

An important immune system component, the human leukocyte antigen (HLA) complex, helps distinguish self from non-self – normal proteins that are part of your body versus proteins that are from invasive organisms, or even damaged or deformed versions of your own normal proteins. The HLA complex achieves this by showing a particularly 'foreign'-looking piece of a bacterial molecule (the antigen) to other immune system components that will hunt down anything resembling this piece. As an analogy, if there were a gang of thieves in your town who wear red-and-white checked shirts, the HLA complex shows this checked shirt to a police patrol.

Genetic determinants

The precise trigger for AS is not known. It has a genetic component, as it is known to run in families, but not everyone in these families is equally affected.

Some variants of the HLA gene (e.g., HLA-B27) are predisposed to AS and other conditions that cause chronic inflammation of the joints of the spine. These variant HLA proteins are not 'manufactured' correctly, leading to a change in their shapes and contours such that they appear to be 'foreign'.

Going back to our thieves analogy, this sentinel molecule itself appears to be wearing a similar checked shirt.

The immune system decides that this HLA variant has to be disposed off by any means possible, including the destruction of cells that carry this protein. The consequences are disastrous – the immune system remains in the activated mode, even in the absence of real danger. The result is chronic inflammation.

Molecules that play key roles in maintaining healthy bone mass and in the repair of fractures are also involved in cementing vertebrae together in AS (*Science Advances*). The HLA-B27 variant is itself very polymorphic, meaning that it has many sub-variations. Probing into the perplexing differences in the severity of AS in people having the disease, the group of Manni Luthra-Guptasarma, working at the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research in Chandigarh, has shown that mild forms of AS are caused by HLA variants that are easily cleared by the body's machinery for breaking down worn out proteins. Other misshapen HLA variants accumulate as aggregated masses inside cells, and the body's inability to clear them out results in severe forms of AS. (*Frontiers in Immunology*).

Management strategies

Pain-relieving drugs, immune system-modifiers and sometimes surgery are used to manage this chronic affliction.

Individual management strategies – exercise routines, firm and flat pillows, and the avoidance of 'trigger' foods such as artificial sweeteners, are of great help.

(The article was written in collaboration with Sushil Chandani who works in molecular modelling. sushilchandani@gmail.com)

dbala@hypei.org

Question Corner

Coccoliths fossils

How resilient were planktons to global warming?

An international team of scientists have found a remarkable type of fossilisation that has remained almost entirely overlooked until now. The fossils are microscopic imprints, or 'ghosts,' of single-celled plankton, called coccolithophores, that lived in the seas millions of years ago, and their discovery is changing our understanding of how plankton in the oceans are affected by climate change.

Declines in the abundance of coccoliths fossils have been documented from multiple past global warming events, suggesting that these plankton were severely affected by climate change and ocean acidification. But a study found (*Science*) new global records of abundant ghost fossils from three Jurassic and Cretaceous warming events (94, 120 and 183 million years ago), suggesting that coccolithophores were more resilient to past climate change than was previously thought.

Despite their microscopic size, coccolithophores can be hugely abundant in the present ocean, being visible from space as cloud-like blooms. After death, their calcareous exoskeletons sink to the seafloor, accumulating in vast numbers, forming rocks such as chalk.

As more mud was gradually deposited on top, the pressure squashed the coccolith plates and other organic remains together, and the hard coccoliths were pressed into the surfaces of pollen, spores and other soft organic matter. Later, acidic waters within spaces in the rock dissolved away the coccoliths, leaving behind just their impressions – the ghosts.

Readers may send their questions / answers to questioncorner@thehindu.co.in

Price rise and GST

Will the government restructure India's Goods and Services Tax rates this year?

VIKAS DHOOT

The story so far: The GST regime, about to complete five years this July, is due for an overhaul in tax rates levied on different products because of structural anomalies and to reduce the multiple tax slabs. A ministerial group of the GST Council, under Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj S. Bommai, was tasked last September to suggest immediate changes, as well as a roadmap for short- and medium-term changes to the GST rate structure. The group of ministers (GoM) is yet to conclude its deliberations.

What is the need to rationalise the GST rates?

■ From businesses' viewpoint, there are just too many tax rate slabs, compounded by aberrations in the duty structure through their supply chains with some inputs taxed more than the final product. There are five broad tax rates of zero, 5%, 12%, 18% and 28%, with a cess levied over and above the 28% on some 'sin' goods. Special lower rates are levied on items like precious stones and diamonds. Tax experts have been flagging that these are far too many rates and do not necessarily constitute a Good and Simple Tax.

For the government, the top priority, apart from simplifying the tax structure in the hope of bolstering compliance, is to rake in more revenues as they believe collections have been underwhelming. At the last full-fledged GST Council meet, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had stressed that the new indirect tax system was premised on a revenue-neutral tax rate of 15.5%, but actual revenues have been steadily going down taking the effective tax rate to 11.6%. "Knowingly or unknowingly, [the rate] was brought down by reduction in tax rates of some items," the Minister had said. Some of these frequent rate cuts were approved by the Council on the eve of critical elections.

> Inflation pressures, that have now transitioned from 'transitory' to persistent and all-pervasive, are likely to put the brakes on the GST rate reset process, according to experts

The need to shore up revenues was also flagged as the assured compensation period for States under the GST compact expires on June 30, so their fiscal space will depend on actual collections thereafter. The Council set up two GoMs to resolve this - one to examine more technology and schemes to improve tax compliance, and another under Mr. Bommai to rationalise tax rates to correct anomalies and consider the merger of different tax slabs.

Haven't GST revenues been hitting new records?

■ Yes, they have - GST revenues have scaled fresh highs in three of the first four months of 2022, going past ₹1.67 lakh crore in April. The government terms this a sign of economic recovery and a reflection of the measures to tighten the screws on tax evaders, but there is another key factor – the runaway pace of price rise. Wholesale price inflation, which captures producers' costs, has been over 10% for over a year and peaked at 15.1% in April. Inflation faced by consumers on the ground has spiked to a near-eight year high of 7.8% in April. In a recent note, Ambit Capital analysts Sumit Shekhar and Eashaan Nair stressed that higher GST revenues "should not be confused" with a rise in consumption which is just 2% above pre-pandemic levels. The rise in prices, they said, was "the single most important factor for higher tax inflows" along with higher imports, compliance tweaks and a boom in the consumption of high-ticket items even as mass consumption goods and services languish.

Can we expect the rate reset this year?

■ Ambit reckoned that a hike in GST rates is 'almost certain' this year to ensure that high collections sustain and States get enough money from July onwards. But any rejig and merger of GST rates will entail some products being taxed higher, with concomitant ripple effects on prices. "The Centre and the States are not unmindful of the desperate need to rationalise the rate slabs and structure but we just need to get the timing right. When inflation is the top worry, whether the Council is ready to tackle this, is a key question," averred a top government official.

The Council is aware of the need to rationalise rates since at least 2019, but has deferred action each year due to macro-level compulsions – starting with slowing growth in 2019-20, followed by the pandemic's onset and the fledgling recovery in 2021-22. With inflation, much of it imported through pricier fuels, commodities and food items, expected to hover high through the year, the GST rate reset hopes appear bleak in 2022-23. Even if the conflict in Europe eases or ceases, its aftermath through sanctions as well as other supply chain disruptions could persist and keep prices high in 2023-24 as well. This may mean an even longer wait for a simpler GST regime, especially as tax hikes are unlikely to be a palatable option ahead of the 2024 general election.

Is the Indo-Pacific bloc limited in scope?

With Asia already having major trade agreements in place, how is the IPEF different?

SUHASINI HAIDAR

The story so far: The launch this week of U.S. President Joseph Biden's new trade initiative for the region, the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), which was witnessed by leaders of 13 countries, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was heralded as the start of a new economic bloc in the region, one which could be seen as a counter to China. The IPEF, which comprises a "baker's dozen" of Australia, Brunei, India, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, the United States and Vietnam, represents 40% of the world's GDP. However, the launch of the IPEF has also been accompanied with some scepticism, not least from within the U.S., about just what it can deliver, given that officials made it clear that it is not a traditional trade deal.

Convergence of powers: Prime Minister Narendra Modi with U.S. President Joe Biden, centre, and Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) launch event in Tokyo on May 23. •REUTERS

What is the IPEF, if not a trade deal?

■ For the past few months, the Biden administration has been working with countries in the Indo-Pacific region to try and bring them on board with the idea of an alternative trading arrangement led by the U.S. The four pillars that the IPEF framework rests on are 'Connected Economy', setting standards on digital trade, cross-border data flows and data localisation; 'Resilient Economy', with supply chain commitments and guarding against price spikes; 'Clean Economy', with commitments on clean energy, decarbonisation, and infrastructure to cut emissions; and 'Fair Economy', in terms of enforcing regimes that cut down on money laundering and corruption, and ensure fair taxation. As a result, the IPEF is more about standard setting and facilitating trade and will not involve more market access for its members. Nor will it negotiate lower tariffs. Officials say as the negotiations proceed, they may incorporate more ideas, but have also stressed that members can take a "pick and choose" attitude towards joining only the pillars that interest them. While this concept has been developed in order to be more inclusive and attract more members, it also has raised questions about the seriousness of the U.S. proposition.

Why is the U.S. promoting this bloc?

■ The IPEF is part of the U.S.'s more than a decade old "Pivot to Asia" programme, re-imagining the Indo-Pacific as a geographic construct including America. The Quad, consisting of India, Australia, Japan and the U.S., is part of the same pitch made originally by the Obama administration, and then re-energised by the Trump administration. The IPEF is also a way for the U.S. to keep its foot in the door on trade in Asia, after the Trump administration walked out of the 11-member Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP, originally the TPP) in 2017 that includes Canada, Mexico and countries in Asia and South America (China has applied to be a member).

The U.S. is also not part of the other big trade bloc, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), that includes China, all 10 members of the ASEAN, as well as Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea, a deal India walked out of in 2019. By announcing a new arrangement that includes India, seven of 10 ASEAN members, and a majority of the RCEP members, the Biden administration is seeking to signal that it has not been cut out of trade in the region. The IPEF also clearly has a geopolitical edge – as it doesn't include China, although the Biden administration stopped short of including Taiwan in the launch, as many U.S. Congress members had demanded.

Given that the U.S. itself is deeply divided on free trade issues, the U.S. Government has chosen not to make the IPEF a trade deal, which would need congressional clearance. At a briefing just prior to the launch, U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai said the government had learnt a "strong lesson" from the TPP experience. "With respect to TPP, I think that the biggest problem with it was that we did not have the support at home to get it through...despite Herculean efforts, it could not be gotten through Congress," Ms. Tai explained.

Finally, the IPEF is part of the Biden administration's way of showing that despite its current focus on the war in Europe, and hot pursuit of Russia through economic sanctions, it has not lost sight that Asia, and the challenge from China, is prominent in the U.S. agenda.

What's in it for India?

■ For the Modi government too, which walked out of the RCEP after eight years of negotiations, the membership of IPEF keeps it in the room on Asian trading arrangements, and is a way of blunting criticism that it is overtly protectionist. In the past year, the government has made a virtual U-turn from its previous antagonism towards bilateral trade agreements. It has concluded its first-ever trade deal in its tenure with the United Arab Emirates, and is in active negotiations to complete deals with the U.K., Australia and Canada.

> The IPEF's non-specific and flexible nature suits India, which has held strong views on a range of issues like labour standards, environmental restrictions on fossil fuels, and data localisation

The IPEF's non-specific and flexible nature also suits India, which has held strong views on a range of issues like labour standards, environmental restrictions on fossil fuels, and data localisation.

India's inclusion also comes from a geopolitical need to counter China's virtual control over Asian trade, given that the RCEP seeks to eliminate about 90% of tariffs amongst members, particularly given India's bilateral issues with China since the 2020 transgressions by the Chinese army at the Line of Actual Control.

For the U.S., and other Quad members Japan and Australia, India's inclusion, which had been tentative in the run-up to the IPEF launch, is important. Although India may not be an ideal participant under current conditions, its exclusion from the IPEF would raise questions about how 'Indo' the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework truly is," remarked a brief on IPEF released by the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in April this year. It is significant that India is the only country in South Asia which has been invited to the grouping, and the U.S. plans to expand the membership further will be watched closely.

How has China responded to the IPEF?

■ Clearly, China has been deeply critical of all U.S. initiatives in the region, as a part of a strategy to "contain China". The Chinese government has accused the U.S. of building an "Asian NATO" in the Quad, of nuclearising the region through the Australia-U.K.-U.S. security pact AUKUS, and has also trained its guns on the IPEF, dismissing its utility, but also warning, as Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin did, that "many countries in the region are worried about the huge cost of 'decoupling' with China."

"The U.S. is taking a selective approach in acceding to regional cooperation initiatives. Now the U.S. proposed the IPEF only to start something new to serve its own interests," Mr. Wang said. Already, three members of ASEAN seen as closest to China: Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos, have chosen not to join IPEF.

What about other criticisms of the arrangement?

■ The biggest criticism of IPEF in other capitals in Asia is that it is still too vague and lacks enough substance. Indian officials said India's participation as an "initial founder" means that it will go along with the negotiations and see where they lead, but, like with RCEP, joining the launch is not the same as joining the eventual IPEF agreement negotiated, and much will depend on whether India's specific red-lines on market protection and services are included.

There is also some scepticism of U.S. initiatives that don't carry any "dollar value". With market access to U.S. and tariff reductions off the table, there are questions about how much "skin in the game" Washington will bring. Previous initiatives like the Blue Dot Network, and the Build Back World initiative with G-7 partners have not brought in the sort of funding required for emerging economies in the region. A Quad initiative for $50 billion in financing infrastructure projects over five years seems unambitious, compared to U.S. spending in other regions, and even on Ukraine in the past few months.

Finally, in selling the IPEF back home in Washington, the U.S. appears to be making the deal more about benefits to the U.S. economy than to the Indo-Pacific region as a whole. U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan's remarks in a press briefing, that the "IPEF is part of President Biden's commitment to putting American families and workers at the centre of [U.S.] economic and foreign policy, while strengthening our ties with allies and partners for the purpose of increasing shared prosperity," raised eyebrows.

Why can't America solve its gun problem?

What is the U.S. Congress' stand on tighter gun control laws? Can the President intervene to usher in reforms?

NARAYAN LAKSHMAN

The story so far: On May 24, a gunman went on a shooting rampage at Robb Elementary School in the small town of Uvalde, Texas, killing 19 children and two teachers. The attack has reminded the U.S. yet again that it has failed to act to stop gun crimes despite the grim toll on human life for several decades. The shooter, identified in reports as 18-year-old Salvador Ramos, carried out the massacre using AR-15 assault rifles, which he allegedly purchased legally from a gun store. The murders, which came scarcely 10 days after 10 people were shot dead at a grocery store in Buffalo, New York, an incident identified as a racist hate crime, have prompted another round of acrimony between liberals and conservatives on the need for tighter gun control laws. U.S. President Joe Biden wasted no time in condemning the attack but was sketchy on details regarding what legislation or executive actions he hoped to push forward to close regulatory loopholes that allow teenagers to buy assault weapons, and, more broadly, a lack of background checks for potential gun buyers. Neither Mr. Biden, nor any of his Democratic predecessors have succeeded in getting common-sense gun control reform passed in the U.S. Congress owing to Republican lawmakers' refusal to budge on their view regarding their constitutional right to bear arms.

In memoriam: Crosses with the names of shooting victims outside Robb Elementary School in Texas on Thursday. •AP

How many school shootings have occurred in recent years?

■ The Uvalde school shooting is the worst such attack on U.S. soil since the incident at Sandy Hook elementary attack in Newtown, Connecticut, in 2012, in which 20 first-graders and six school employees were killed. A similar toll on human life came after a shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in 2018, when a former student of the school in Parkland, Florida, killed 17 persons and wounded 17 others.

Overall, there have been at least 26 school shootings in 2022 alone and at least 118 incidents since 2018, according to reports that have tracked this statistic over the past four years. However, these include 'non-mass shootings' where fewer than four persons were killed in a single incident. Using this statistic, 2021 witnessed 34 shootings, the highest number during this period, followed by 24 incidents each in 2019 and 2018 and 10 shootings in 2020.

Considering mass school shootings alone, there have been 13 such attacks since 1966, including notably the Columbine High School massacre of 1999, at that time the worst mass shooting at a school in American history. It is concerning that the Columbine attack's death toll now ranks fourth, after the three more recent shootings at Uvalde, Parkland and Newtown overtook the former on that grim statistic during the past decade.

> The interpretation of the Second Amendment that remains is that it guarantees, at the individual level, the right to bear arms. Overall, there have been at least 26 school shootings in 2022 alone, according to reports

What is the role of the Second Amendment?

■ The U.S.'s penchant for gun ownership stems from its deep belief in the Second Amendment of its constitution, which assures its citizenry that "a well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." The Second Amendment, ratified in 1791, was one of 10 such that together make up the Bill of Rights in the U.S. constitution. The original intent of the founding fathers of the nation was to give to the people the right to defend themselves against an oppressive government and create an armed militia that could be recruited into federal military in the event of a war with a foreign power. However, after the balance of power shifted from the states to the federal government, including technological advances that made the U.S. military a far superior force than any local or state militia could hope to be, the only interpretation of the Second Amendment that remained was that it guaranteed, at the individual level, the right to bear arms.

In 1939, the U.S. Supreme Court considered the matter in *United States v. Miller* and ruled that local, state, and federal legislative bodies possessed the authority to regulate firearms without implicating a constitutional right given that there was no individual right to bear arms, only a collective right of the citizenry. Using this ruling the state then regulated the inter-state commerce of sawed-off shotguns, which it deemed to not be consistent with any requirements of a "well-regulated militia." That interpretation stood until 2008, in the case of *District of Columbia v. Heller*, where the Supreme Court held that the "Second Amendment protects an individual right to possess a firearm unconnected with service in a militia, and to use that arm for traditionally lawful purposes, such as self-defence within the home," effectively reading down a ban on handgun possession in Washington DC.

Regardless of the state of legal protections, a strong culture of gun ownership has permeated the broader consciousness of security-minded U.S. citizens since the times of the 'Wild West' or America frontier days. Today that culture is most fervently institutionalised in the Republican party, which has close links to the National Rifle Association, also a well-networked and deep pocketed organisation that systematically lobbies with lawmakers on Capitol Hill to get specific laws passed favouring the possession and trade of firearms.

It is in this context that there are no surprises that Congress rejected no fewer than 17 attempts by the administration of former President Barack Obama to get common-sense gun control passed on the floor of the Senate. In the end Mr. Obama resorted to passing gun control reform by diktat, that is through the temporary route of executive actions. Exercising presidential power in this manner may be the only option available to Mr. Biden. These should, at a minimum, include an assault weapons ban, expanded background checks, and ban on gun ownership by those with mental illness, criminal records, or minors.

YASIN MALIK

The poster boy of separatism in Kashmir

The JKLF leader has a complex past of both fighting and engaging India, but he has remained a hardliner when it comes to his ideology

ILLUSTRATION: R.RAJESH

PEERZADA ASHIQ

The Jammu-Kashmir Plebiscite Front (JKPF), the parent organisation of the Jammu & Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), was founded by Maqbool Bhat, a Kashmiri school teacher, in 1966, the same year Yasin Malik was born. Last week, Malik, who is the current chairman of the JKLF, was sentenced to life imprisonment in an illegal cross-border funding case.

Amanullah Khan, from the Gilgit-Baltistan region of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), was the first chairman of the JKLF, set up in 1977 for "liberating" J&K from both India and Pakistan. Khan died in Pakistan in 2016. The JKLF, as an armed group, came under spotlight in 1984 when its men living in the U.K. kidnapped Ravindra Hareshwar Mhatre, a 48- year-old Indian diplomat, from a bus stop. The first ever kidnapping by the JKLF was a desperate bid to get its jailed patron Bhat released. But it didn't work out as per plan. Mhatre's body was found three days later in Birmingham. The incident spurred the case proceedings against Bhat, who was hanged in 1984 in Tihar, for the murder of a Criminal Investigation Department (CID) officer in 1968.

After this incident, the JKLF faded from the scene till December 8, 1989 when the outfit, with just 40 members in its ranks, kidnapped the then Union Home Minister Mufti Muhammad Sayeed's daughter, while she was on the way home from her medical college in Srinagar, at around 3:45 p.m.

Moosa Raza, who was the J&K Chief Secretary in 1989, has described the impact of the kidnapping on the security situation in the state in his book, *Kashmir: Land of Regrets*: "The Intelligence Bureau chief was as much in the dark as the local police. The JKLF claimed responsibility and demanded the release of their members from the custody in exchange of Ms. Sayeed. The JKLF decided to do abduction so that it could become a cause célèbre."

Ground support

On the ground, the incident proved as a cause célèbre for the JKLF and its aim was to galvanise ground support for its ideology in Kashmir, as their five men were released in exchange of Ms. Sayeed. It empowered the JKLF further. Later, the outfit's widely-known HAJY group – Hamid Sheikh, Ashfaq Majeed Wani, Javed Ahmad Mir and Yasin Malik – who had crossed to PoK in 1988 for arms training, became the poster boys of militancy in Kashmir.

The popularity of the group made even Pakistan rethink its Kashmir policy, and left many in the deep state edgy. It was reflected in the floating of the Hizbul Mujahideen militant outfit, which, contrary to the JKLF's goal of "complete independence", demanded accession of J&K to Pakistan.

Since Yasin Malik announced a ceasefire in 1994, governments in India halted pursuing cases against him; but this policy changed after the BJP came to power in 2014

Frail-looking, but agile and angry Malik became the face of the JKLF after his two aides Hamid Sheikh and Ashfaq Wani died in two separate encounters in Srinagar by 1992. Before his JKLF role, Malik, who comes from a humble dwelling in Srinagar's Maisuma locality, was a polling agent in the Batamaloo area of the Muslim United Front (MUF) candidate Mohammad Yusuf Shah, who, after his defeat in the 1987 rigged polls, became Syed Salahuddin of the United Jehad Council.

Mr. Raza described in his book the indelible mark left on the psyche of the MUF and its supporters by the 1987 rigged elections, which triggered a new wave of violence in J&K. "I told Abdul Majid Wani (father of Ashfaq Wani). You are claiming to fight for justice. But you yourself are committing an injustice by kidnapping an innocent girl and holding her captive against her will. I know your son and other leaders of the JKLF are, perhaps, on the ground floor. Please explain the point to them and get response," Mr. Raza wrote.

The senior Wani returned to the room with a message from the kidnappers. "Sir, these are good boys. They consider Rubaiya as their own sister. They would not harm her in any way. But they say that because they functioned as the polling agents for the MUF candidates in the last election, they were arrested, beaten up and jailed. Is that not an injustice?"

Malik was arrested in August 1990 amidst the height of militancy. By that time, he had started showing signs that he was keen to initiate a political process on Kashmir. He kept meeting diplomats from the West and left-oriented intellectuals from the country, besides the official emissaries, including intelligence chiefs. Malik once said that reading about the resistance put up by Mahatma Gandhi in a Delhi jail motivated him to change the course of his approach on the Kashmir issue.

Malik took an unpopular decision to declare a ceasefire in 1994, which split the JKLF into two camps: Amanullah Khan's faction in PoK and Malik's faction in Kashmir. This earned him hatred among sections in Pakistan but also won the faith of many in India, especially the ruling political class, which wanted to put an end to the growing and uncontrolled armed rebellion in the Valley.

No written record

Interestingly, there is no written record of the ceasefire agreement and the conditions agreed to by Malik and the then government. However, the decision by the previous governments not to pursue cases against him was a signal enough in that direction. In 2009, the Srinagar wing of the TADA court stayed the trials and directed that proceeding "to remain in abeyance" in two key cases faced by Malik – the killing of Indian Air Force men in Srinagar's Rawalpora area and kidnapping of Ms. Sayeed. The policy, however, was upended by the BJP government after it came to power in 2014. This has ended New Delhi's policy to engage separatists in Kashmir as stakeholders.

Over the years, Malik had been the go-to man for Delhi in Kashmir to set a stage for talks, whenever the valley witnessed eruptions. In 2006, he supported talks between India and Pakistan on Kashmir and was sent to Pakistan by emissaries of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to prevail upon militant outfits there to back the four-point formula, which was being negotiated.

In response to an offer of talks by L.K Advani, who was a Union Minister in the NDA government, Malik told CNN in 2000: "Previous governments also offered talks – the governments of V.P. Singh, Narasimha Rao, Deve Gowda and I.K. Gujral – but they all had the same conditions. I don't think [this government] has shown any flexibility."

Malik always proved to be a tough nut for both Pakistan and India, when it came to his ideological core. In 2000, Malik hurled a shoe at Pakistani-American businessman Mansoor Ijaz, who was negotiating between India, Pakistan and separatists at the behest of the U.S., following a verbal brawl over understanding of the Kashmir issue. In 2016, Malik wrote a letter to Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif warning against changing the status of Gilgit-Baltistan.

Much to the chagrin of New Delhi, Malik steered politics agitations in Kashmir between 2008 and 2016. He travelled across Kashmir in 2007 during the 'Safar-i-Aazadi (Journey of Freedom)' campaign and collected 70,000 signatures from locals to emphasise the need to include the people of J&K in the dialogue process.

Separatist politics

Now, Malik's JKLF stands banned. He was arrested and the JKLF office in Srinagar sealed after the Union Home Ministry issued the ban order in March 2019, just one month after the Pulwama attack by the Jaish-e-Mohammed.

The conviction of Malik is fraught with implications. In the short term, the safety valve of separatist politics, which Delhi had used in the past, will come to an end. This will provide space to new militant faces to dominate the scene in the Valley. On the other side, Delhi would hope that the conviction of Malik would act as a deterrent against rebellion among the future generations. But Maqbool Bhat's hanging did not act as a deterrent in the long run. So it is to be seen how Malik's sentencing would impact militancy in Kashmir.

In Focus

- Yasin Malik was one of the four members of the infamous HAJY group. They became the poster boys of the JKLF in the 1980s
- In 1994, Malik announced a ceasefire, an unpopular decision among the rank and file of the JKLF, which led to a split in the organisation
- In 2006, Malik supported talks between India and Pakistan and was sent to Pakistan by Manmohan Singh's govt. to prevail upon militants to back dialogue

KAPIL SIBAL

The rebel who quit

The lawyer-politician, who left the Congress, says he is looking at the future

SANDEEP PHUKAN

ILLUSTRATION: SREEJITH R KUMAR

Among the most outspoken lawyer-politicians, Kapil Sibal parted with the Congress after nearly a three-decade-long relationship in a rather mellow affair. He refused to get drawn into any debate about the party leadership under the Gandhis, though questions are being asked if his rebellion was all about getting a Rajya Sabha berth.

"I am not a Congressman any more and won't speak about the party. I want to move forward and look towards the future," Mr. Sibal, 73, told *The Hindu*, hours after filing his nomination as an Independent candidate, backed by the Samajwadi Party (SP), for the Rajya Sabha election.

His move forward in politics, however, seems to follow a familiar path. In 1998, he first entered the Rajya Sabha from Bihar with help from Lalu Prasad's Rashtriya Janata Dal and the Congress, then headed by Sitaram Kesri. This was his second attempt at politics; his first brush was in 1996 when he lost the Lok Sabha election to the late Sushma Swaraj of the BJP in the South Delhi constituency. "A defeat in court does not hurt as much because a lot depends on the merits of the case, but when I lost from South Delhi, I told myself that I must somehow avenge by living to fight elections another day," Mr. Sibal wrote in his book *Shades of Truth: A Journey Derailed*.

This ability to put up a "spirited" fight brought him fame and controversies in equal measure.

Whether it was his "zero loss" theory to explain allocation of 2G spectrum during the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government or bringing in the now struck-down Section 66-A of the Information Technology Act to censor social media platforms, Mr. Sibal threw himself open to sharp attacks from rivals.

He was born in 1948 at Jalandhar, as the youngest of the four sons of Kailash Rani and Hira Lal Sibal, a distinguished lawyer who had famously defended the renowned writer Sadaat Hasan Manto in a Lahore court against charges of "obscenity" in his writings. While studying history at St. Stephen's College, the Sibal junior was well-known for his theatrical skills as a member of the Shakespeare Society. During this time, he met Nina Singh, a Miranda House college student, who went on to become his first wife. The story goes that he took and cleared the civil services exam in 1973 to join Nina, who had cleared the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) a year earlier. But when he got the IAS instead of the IFS, he dropped out.

Big moment

After getting married that year, he followed her to the U.S., where she was posted as a young diplomat, to pursue his Master's in Law from the prestigious Harvard Law School. After returning to India, Mr. Sibal earned a reputation for himself by taking up high-profile cases in the 1980s and became Additional Solicitor-General in December 1989. But his big moment came in 1993 when he defended Justice V. Ramaswami, the first Supreme Court judge to face an impeachment motion in Parliament. A lawyer whose client list included the who's who of Indian politics, Mr. Sibal defended Mr. Prasad in the 1997 fodder scam and ensured a Rajya Sabha berth a year later.

In 1998, when Sonia Gandhi took over as the Congress president, he became a party spokesperson. Two years later, he not only spoke out against the party leadership but also backed Jitendra Prasada, who had unsuccessfully contested against Ms. Gandhi for the post of party president. This was also the year when Mr. Sibal lost Nina to cancer. He married entrepreneur Promila five years later..

'Trouble shooter'

In 2004, after winning Delhi's Chandni Chowk seat, Mr. Sibal was made the Minister for Science and Technology by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Portfolios as diverse as Human Resource Development, Telecommunications & IT and Law & Justice became part of his growing responsibilities, and he was known as a "trouble shooter" within the party.

However, as the Congress's electoral fortunes continued to slide, Mr. Sibal joined the party's ginger group (referred to as G-23) in August 2020 to press for "a visible and collective leadership". Last September, he crossed a red line with his comments that "in our party, at the moment, we have no president " and "we are G-23, but definitely not *Ji Huzoor* [yes-men] 23".

And now, he's no longer with the party.

ANTHONY ALBANESE

An affable pragmatist

Australia's new PM will need the support of Greens for his legislative agenda

SRINIVASAN RAMANI

ILLUSTRATION: J.A.PREMKUMAR

Freshly minted Prime Minister of Australia, Anthony Albanese, is no newcomer to politics. Elected as a member from the division of Grayndler in the State of New South Wales, first in 1996, Mr. Albanese has been a veteran member of Parliament, having served as a Minister in the Kevin Rudd- Julia Gillard governments and was even Deputy Prime Minister for a brief while in the last few months of the Rudd-led Labor government before becoming the Leader of Opposition in May 2019.

He has working class origins, who lived with his single mother – a recipient of disability pensions – in a Sydney City Council home and is a self-made politician with formative years in the left-wing student politics (Young Labor) that allowed him to later become a member of the left faction of the Labor Party.

As the leader of the party during the 2022 elections, though, Mr. Albanese had tacked closer to the centre, an outcome that was the product of the Labor Party's review following the defeat to the Liberal National Coalition in the 2019 elections. Mr. Albanese's Labor withdrew policies that sought to remove tax concessions to the wealthiest Australians – a legacy of Liberal/National Coalition rule, tried to promote a more pro-business orientation and also ratcheted down its sharp rhetoric on climate change, focussing instead on mending relations with people employed in fossil fuel use sectors such as coal mining. By doing so, Mr. Albanese was hearkening back to the legacy of Bob Hawke and Paul Keating-led Labor governments in the 1980s and 1990s. Mr. Albanese was quoted in an article in *The Conversation* as saying clearly, "If Labor is successful in the coming federal election, I will take my lead from Bob Hawke and his successor Paul Keating... We must rediscover the spirit of consensus [...] Bob Hawke used to bring together governments, trade unions, businesses and civil society around their shared aims of growth and job creation".

In other words, the Albanese-led Labor platform is expected to tack to the Australian equivalent of the 'New Labour' way promoted by Tony Blair and his successor Gordon Brown in the U.K. Such a positioning helped Mr. Albanese consolidate support within the Labor party.

Centrist position

But was this ploy to take a more centrist position key to the Labor's success? It is difficult to say. By most accounts by election observers in Australia, the Liberal/National Coalition's loss was quite pronounced clearly due to the perceived incompetence of the Scott Morrison leadership, the government's inability to tackle searing problems such as the raging wildfires that devastated many parts of the country, the COVID-19 mismanagement and it's dilly-dallying approach towards tackling climate change. It was to the credit of Mr. Albanese that he was able to utilise a low-key but effective campaign, positioning himself as the sane voice of opposition who offered a constructive critique of the government in power and stressed his affable nature and working class roots to build a broad coalition of support.

Yet, much of the losses for the Liberal/National Coalition were converted into gains for the fledgling Green party and corporate sponsored independents seeking decisive actions against climate change, except in States like Western Australia, where Labor was the beneficiary. As things stand, Labor leads or has won in 75 of the 151 seats in the House of Representatives and would require cooperation with the Greens (4 seats) and independents to pass clear cut legislation. In the upper house (Senate), Labor is clearly dependent upon the Greens (12 seats as opposed to Labor's 26 out of a total of 76) as well.

In sum, the new Labor government could mark a clear shift toward climate-friendly policies, but is expected to take a more cautious approach on economic and strategic matters, which could mean continuity on those issues after nine years of Liberal party rule.

Even so, under Mr. Albanese, the Labor government could take a more expansive role on welfare such as better care for the aged, lower costs of childhood education, gender parity and safety in workplaces, and a greater thrust for the use of renewable energy. But this would, of course, require a push from his colleagues from the Labor Left, and the Greens and progressives in Australian civil society.

M&M Q4 net jumps fivefold

Automaker logs standalone net profit of ₹1,292 crore, revenue rises 28%

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. (M&M) on Saturday reported fourth-quarter standalone net profit jumped fivefold to ₹1,292 crore, aided by record sales of utility vehicles (UVs).

Standalone revenue grew 28% to ₹17,124 crore.

For FY22, standalone net profit surged fivefold to ₹4,935 crore, while revenue rose 29% to ₹57,446 crore, the maker of UVs and tractors said in a press release.

During the three months ended March, M&M sold a total of 1,52,204 vehicles, a 43% increase from the year-earlier quarter. An improvement in the supply of semiconductors helped buoy quarterly UV sales volume to the highest-ever level, the company said.

UV boost: Improved semiconductor supplies helped lift quarterly utility vehicle sales volume to a record. •REUTERS

"Our performance in Q4 and FY22 underscores the resilience of our business model," said MD & CEO Anish Shah. "Despite significant challenges due to various factors like COVID, commodity prices, semiconductor shortages and the Ukraine conflict, we have delivered strong results at the consolidated level. All of our group companies are well positioned to capitalise on growth opportunities," he added.

Consolidated profit grew 48% in the fourth quarter to ₹2,237 crore, while revenue rose 21% to ₹25,934 crore. Profit almost doubled in the full year at a consolidated level to ₹6,577 crore, from ₹3,348 crore.

Sales volume for the full year rose 31% to 4,55,570 units. However, tractor sales declined 23% in the fourth quarter to 72,058 units, and remained almost flat in FY22 at 3,50,981 units.

'Demand stays strong'

"With over 1,70,000 bookings, the demand for the automotive product portfolio remains strong," said ED Rajesh Jejurikar.

"Farm equipment sector delivered second-highest full-year profit before interest and tax despite market slowdown and steep commodity inflation," he added.

'Tesla won't make in India if not let to sell'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Tesla, which has been seeking reduction in import duties to sell its vehicles in India, will not manufacture its products locally unless it is allowed to first sell and service its cars in the country, founder and chief executive Elon Musk has said.

In a tweet responding to a user, he said, "Tesla will not put a manufacturing plant in any location where we are not allowed first to sell & service cars."

Last month, Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari had said if Tesla was ready to manufacture its electric vehicles in India then there was 'no problem' but the company must not import cars from China.

INTERVIEW | ANKIT MEHTA

Pandemic led to an uptick in demand for drones: ideaForge

'Fear of exposure while deploying manpower elevated need'

JAGRITI CHANDRA

More than 75 drone start-ups participated in a two-day drone festival unveiled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday. Global UAV player ideaForge's co-founder and CEO **Ankit Mehta** *comments on the government's push for drones.*

There have been several policy announcements in the past 18 months on drones – from liberalised rules to PLI schemes and the import ban. What do you make of them?

■ Prior to the pandemic, this industry was a poorly treated step-child as far as policies were concerned.

We had a very challenging policy that also didn't give any exemptions, which changed when the pandemic happened. Suddenly, the government started giving us exemptions that started to unlock the sector. Though the government revised the drone rules, these were worse than before, and we demanded a relook. As a result, we have rules that are easy to understand and comply with.

Earlier, drones were a good-to-have technology, but during the pandemic it was difficult to deploy manpower for various tasks for fear of exposure, and there were wars which elevated the stark need for drones.

Why was the export ban announced in February, needed?

■ Export of drones is restricted because we are signatories of the Wassenaar Arrangement, which China has not signed. As a result, they are able to export to everyone in the world, but everyone who is a signatory has an obligation to prevent export and proliferation of this technology. So, we have to face an uneven commercial environment for our manufacturers.

You are also a member of the FICCI task force on drones. What are your demands from the government?

■ We are proud that a lot of our suggestions were taken into account by the government to bring about policy changes such as the PLI scheme, as well as the need for liberalising drone rules. But one bastion that needs to be conquered is our export approach. It takes anytime between 45 days and six months to get an approval. There is no predictability in the process, which is a hurdle for us.

What was the impact of the semiconductor supply chain issue in the past two years?

■ The impact was huge even for the low volumes the industry was handling in India because everything was wiped out. So, we have had to re-engineer, revalidate and make sure that we could operate.

So, while we could not let the customer timelines slip, it was obviously a lot of pain for us to rebuild the things we had already worked on. Some of these supply chain issues still exist, but they have tapered down.

What are the areas the Indian drone industry excels in, and where does it still have some ground to cover?

■ Our industry excels in building systems that can operate in our environmental conditions, which are some of the harshest – we have high altitude operations at heights that don't exist anywhere else, then we have operations in deserts, marshy areas, marine environments. We build systems that work here, which means they are pretty much likely to work everywhere else in the world as well.

Second piece we are good at is performance, which is much higher than the global expectation.

Where we can improve is automation, as the global expectation is much higher. We also need to be able to have more use cases. For example, commercial delivery through drones hasn't yet taken off in India, which we have seen in countries like Australia.

Apart from the use of drones in agriculture or mapping, there is also interest from law and order agencies for buying them for surveillance. But how do you address privacy concerns? Does that ever come up in discussions?

■ So, people are also concerned about use of drones for carrying munitions, but why do people have munitions in the first place. A drone is just a vector.

Privacy is a very important concern, but it is not the drone that is creating the problem.

MeitY issues draft norms on non-personal data collection

Policy proposes rules for safe access by research ecosystem

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) has issued a draft National Data Governance Framework to mobilise non-personal data of citizens for use by both public and private entities to improve services.

The draft policy proposes the launch of a non-personal data based India datasets programme and addresses the methods and rules to ensure that non-personal and anonymised data from both government and private entities are safely accessible by the research and innovation ecosystem.

The framework will also accelerate digitisation of govt. with common standards

Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar said the National Data Governance Framework was of interest to artificial intelligence (AI) startups, AI research entities, and government departments.

"Its imp piece of policy framework thats being devlopd to catalyze #India's $1 Trillion #DigitalEconomy," he tweeted.

Asking stakeholders to comment on the draft framework, the Minister said the National Data Governance Framework would also accelerate digital government and digitisation of government with common standards, rules and guidelines for data storage and management across all departments.

The Ministry said during the COVID-19 pandemic, digital governance played a big part in India's resilient response to the pandemic and its impact on lives, livelihoods and the economy.

The Ministry has fixed June 11 as the deadline for the submission of comments by stakeholders on the draft available on its website.

Adani's drone arm mulls two revenue models

'Primary focus on agriculture sector'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Adani Group's commercial drones division is exploring two revenue models – dealer-based and service-based – while keeping its primary focus on the agriculture sector, a top group official said on Saturday.

•REPRESENTATIONAL PHOTO

In a dealer-based model, the equipment is sold directly to the customer. In a service-based model, the equipment is provided for various services for a fee in partnership with a local entrepreneur or an institution. The tractor industry uses both these sales models.

"We are exploring both models," said Rangarajan Vijayaraghavan, VP, Strategy and Chairman's Office, Adani Group. "Depending on the market response, we will take our decisions," Mr. Vijayaraghavan added.

In the service-based model, the Adani Group would provide drones for services such as pesticide spraying for a fee in partnership with a local entrepreneur or an institution, which in this case would be pesticide companies, he said.

'India seen facing wider coal crunch, power outage risks'

Local supply to fall 42.5 MT short of demand in Sept. quarter

REUTERS
NEW DELHI

India is expected to face a wider coal shortage during the quarter ending September over expectations of higher power demand, an internal power ministry presentation seen by Reuters showed, worsening risks of widespread power outages.

The energy-hungry nation expects local coal supply to fall 42.5 million tonnes short of demand in the September quarter, 15% higher than previously projected, due to higher growth in power demand and lower output from some mines.

The grim forecast shows the extent of the fuel shortage in India, at a time when annual power demand is seen growing at the fastest rate in at least 38 years and global coal prices are trading at near-record levels due to a supply crunch resulting from the Russia-Ukraine crisis.

Near nil: Most states are yet to award contracts to import coal and utilities will go dry by July if imports are not done. •AFP

Pressure on utilities

India has stepped up pressure on utilities to increase imports in recent days, warning of cuts to supply of domestically mined coal if power plants do not build up coal inventories through imports.

However, one of the slides in the presentation showed that most States had yet to award contracts to import coal and that Indian utilities would run out of coal by July if no coal was imported.

Only one State had awarded a contract to import coal as of end-April, a power ministry import status report reviewed by Reuters showed.

India expects domestic coal supply of 154.7 million tonnes, 42.5 million tonnes short of the projected requirement of 197.3 million tonnes in the September quarter, the presentation showed. It previously expected a shortage of 37 million tonnes.

The presentation was made on Friday in a virtual meeting in which the federal coal and power ministers were present, with top energy officials from the federal government and the States in attendance, according to two government officials familiar with the matter.

States cite high global prices and supply challenges to seek aggregated imports

The federal coal and power ministries did not immediately respond to a request seeking comment. Details on the presentation have not been previously reported.

Coal inventories at power plants have declined by about 13% since April, which translates to eight days of coal requirement, the lowest level at this time of the year in at least nine years.

The higher coal demand could also stifle efforts to build power plant inventories.

India now expects the demand for coal from utilities to be 784.6 million tonnes for the year ending March 2023, the presentation showed, 3.3% higher than projected earlier.

The projected annual coal shortage is now 49.3 million tonnes, nearly three times the 17.7 million tonnes projected earlier, the presentation showed.

India reconciled its coal demand projections after higher-than-expected power demand growth in April, when electricity use hit a record high due to soaring temperatures.

Call for bulk import

Many States on Friday called for the federal government-run Coal India to import coal in bulk and distribute it among the States, the officials said.

States cited high global prices and supply challenges to seek aggregated imports, the officials said, adding that the coal minister had told States the demand would be considered.

Higher imports could put further pressure on State government-owned power distribution companies, which are already saddled with debt and owe billions of dollars to generators as they have historically absorbed higher input costs to keep tariffs steady. Coal India did not immediately respond to a request seeking comment.

The world's largest miner has not imported coal in recent years.

Coal India to import the fuel for first time since 2015

REUTERS
NEW DELHI

Coal India will import the fuel for use by utilities, a Power Ministry letter seen by Reuters showed on Saturday, as shortages raise concerns about power outages. It would be the first time since 2015 that Coal India has imported the fuel, highlighting efforts by State and federal officials to stock up to avoid a repeat of April, when India faced its worst power cuts in more than six years.

"Coal India would import coal for blending on government-to-government (G2G) basis and supply... to thermal power plants of State generators and independent power producers (IPPs)," the Power Ministry said in the letter dated May 28.

The letter was sent to all utilities, top federal and State energy officials including the Coal Secretary.

'Pooled procurement'

The Power Ministry said the decision was taken after nearly all States suggested that multiple coal import tenders would lead to a confusion and sought centralised procurement through Coal India.

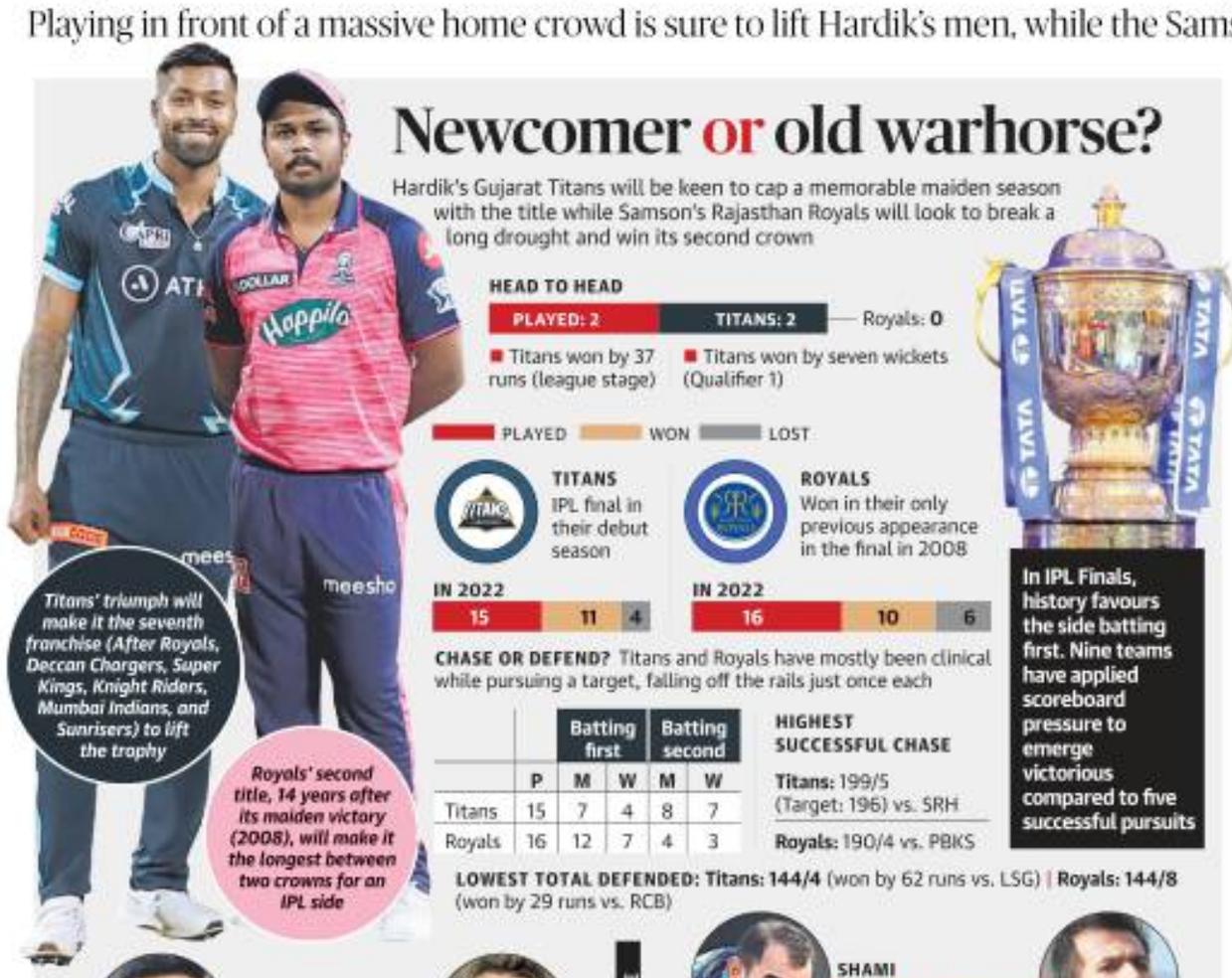
India stepped up pressure on utilities to increase imports to blend with local coal in recent days, warning of cuts to the supply of domestically mined coal if power plants did not build up coal inventories through imports.

But the power ministry on Saturday asked States to suspend tenders that are "under process".

"The tenders under process by State generators and IPPs for importing coal for blending may be kept in abeyance to await the price discovery by Coal India through G2G route, so as to procure coal at least possible rates," it said.

Sparks set to fly as Titans and Royals lock horns in title clash

Playing in front of a massive home crowd is sure to lift Hardik's men, while the Samson-led side will be keen to pay a fitting tribute to Warne



IPL 2022

ASHWIN ACHAL
AHMEDABAD

Old head Rajasthan Royals and new kid on the block Gujarat Titans will go toe to toe in the IPL final here on Sunday.

Fourteen years have passed since Royals famously beat all odds to win the inaugural IPL edition. The late Shane Warne brilliantly led an unheralded team on an inspired run. Warne, who acted as captain and coach, was widely praised for banking on consistent team effort rather than star power.

Experience of a lifetime

For the likes of Swapnil Asnodkar, Mahesh Rawat, Siddharth Trivedi, Niraj Patel and a young Ravindra Jadeja, the lesser-known names in the Rajasthan squad, it was an experience of a lifetime.

That triumph will live forever. Even current captain Sanju Samson recalled watching Royals outclass Chennai Super Kings in the 2008 final. "I was playing an under-16 game in Kerala at the time," Samson told the host broadcaster.

A second title for the Rajasthan side will be a fitting tribute to the 'First Royal' Warne, who passed away a couple of months ago. Samson and his teammates are keen to celebrate the great Australian with a thumping performance on Sunday.

"Right from the start of the tournament, we've played for Warne. We are just one step away from doing something special for him," Samson told iplt20.com.

Much will depend on Samson and Jos Buttler who struck a blistering century against Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) in Qualifier 2 here on Friday.

Gunning for glory: Titans and Royals took contrasting routes to the final, but both outfits will have only one target in mind on Sunday — the IPL winner's trophy. • SPORTZPICS/IPL

The bowling attack – consisting of pacers Trent Boult, Prasidh Krishna and Obed McCoy, and experienced spinners Yuzvendra Chahal and R. Ashwin – is among the best in the business.

Gujarat Titans, the group-stage table-topper, stands in Royals' way. The prospect of playing in front of a massive sold-out home crowd is sure to lift Titans to great heights.

For the record, Titans got the better of Royals in Qualifier 1 a few days ago.

Captain Hardik Pandya has been blessed with the Midas touch in this debut season for the franchise. South African David Miller has proven his worth as a finisher, while Shubman Gill and Wriddhiman Saha have been consistent at the top of the order. Hardik, who has unbeaten scores of 40 and 62 in the previous two outings, is a stable middle-order presence.

Afghanistan spinner Rashid Khan, with his deadly accuracy and variations, will choke the run flow. If the Royals batters try to hit Rashid out of the attack, he could add to his healthy tally of 18 wickets. Royals will also be wary of losing early wickets to fast bowler Mohammed Shami (19 wickets) – another standout performer.

It should be a spectacular night out at the Narendra Modi Stadium.

TODAY'S MATCH
THE FINAL
TITANS vs. ROYALS
AHMEDABAD, 8 P.M.
FORM GUIDE
(last five matches, latest game first)
GT W | L | W | W | L
RR W | L | W | W | L
STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD)

Miller and Rashid: vital cogs in Titans' wheel

Former benefited from team's backing; latter thrives in building up pressure

Three musketeers: Miller, Hardik and Rashid have played major roles in Titans' impressive campaign. • SPORTZPICS/IPL

SPORTS REPORTER
AHMEDABAD

Playing with the full backing of the team management has got the best out of David Miller. The South African, a permanent fixture in the Gujarat Titans eleven this season, stands as the second-highest run-scorer for the side, behind Hardik Pandya.

This sense of stability was missing in his previous five IPL seasons, spent at Kings XI Punjab and Rajasthan Royals, where he was in and out of the team.

Preferred spot

Batting at his preferred three-drop spot for Titans, Miller scored a match-winning unbeaten 38-ball 68 against Rajasthan Royals in Qualifier 1 at Kolkata. His confidence is high – a great sign for Gujarat ahead of the final against Royals.

"The environment has a big part to play in all of our performances. As a player, if you are well looked after off the field, you feel comfortable and feel that you can be yourself.

"The last four-five years in the IPL – I had a bad season in 2016 – and since then, I haven't really felt backed at all. It's the nature of the IPL – there's a lot of overseas players and only four can play. So it is very understandable for teams to think like that," Miller said in a media interaction.

Miserly economy rate

Miller's teammate Rashid Khan has been another vital cog in the Titans wheel. The Afghanistan spinner, who boasts of a miserly economy rate of 6.73 this season, stated that he is happy to create wickets for his bowling partners.

"Teams are playing it safe against me. So I am trying to keep it tight, and that increases the chances of bowlers at the other end picking up wickets.

"Irrespective of whether it is a league game or knockouts, my mindset is to bowl in a certain area. My objective is to build pressure," Rashid said.

Rashid has also done well with the bat, contributing quick runs in the death overs. "I batted a bit higher than where I was batting before. The coaching staff, captain and all players believe that I will be able to perform. That is the kind of energy you need as a player. I always had that belief that I can score 20-25 runs for the team at the end," Rashid said.

Buttler back to marauding best in the playoffs

Has rediscovered his spectacular form after a brief slump

ASHWIN ACHAL
AHMEDABAD

Rajasthan Royals opener Jos Buttler jumped high and pumped his fists after completing his century against Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) in the Qualifier 2 here on Friday.

Buttler delivered on the big occasion, with his knock guiding Rajasthan to a comprehensive seven-wicket victory in this knockout fixture.

Buttler's plentiful returns have been crucial to Rajasthan's progress to the final. The English batter has four centuries this season, equalling Virat Kohli's 2016 record of most centuries in an IPL edition.

Buttler goes at a hectic pace in the PowerPlay, which effectively deflates opponents early. With 824 runs this year, he is the undisputed Orange Cap holder, over 200 runs ahead of nearest rival K.L. Rahul.

Excited

"I was very excited to play in the stadium with 1,00,000 people. The atmosphere was amazing. After two years of playing in empty stadiums... this is what IPL is all about. I was so excited after getting my hundred, I could not control it," Buttler said in an iplt20.com video.

The 31-year-old is primed to come good on the grand stage – the final against Gujarat Titans here on Sunday.

Buttler overcame a brief stutter towards the end of the group stage matches, when he was dismissed for three single-digit scores on the trot.

Conversations with Rajasthan Royals Director of Cricket Kumar Sangakkara lifted Buttler out of the mini-slump.

In the post-match media interaction on Friday, Sangakkara rated Buttler's performance very high.

"Jos had a bit of flutter recently, but he calmed himself down and had good conversations with us.

"He can accelerate at any point, and he has all the strokes. He understands the game very well. I can't remember anyone else batting this well in the history of the IPL," Sangakkara said.

In the zone: Buttler could not hide his joy after notching up his fourth century of the season in Qualifier 2. • SPORTZPICS/IPL

Supernovas shines the brightest

Velocity, despite Wolvaardt's effort, falls agonisingly short

Ruling the roost: Supernovas clinched a third title in four editions. • SPORTZPICS/IPL

T20 CHALLENGE

P.K. AJITH KUMAR
PUNE

This sprawling city may have hosted the country's first-ever Nationals in women's cricket nearly half-a-century ago, but it didn't seem too excited about the Women's T20 Challenge. Until Saturday night, that is.

An excellent crowd turned up at the MCA Stadium for the final. Supernovas won a memorable game by four runs.

It was the third title in four editions for Supernovas. If Velocity came so close, chasing 166, that was because of a stunning fightback staged by Laura Wolvaardt (65 n.o., 40b, 5x4, 3x6) and Simran Bahadur (20 n.o., 10b, 3x4, 1x6), with their unbroken stand of 44 for the ninth wicket.

When the duo came together, the match was all but over at 117 for eight with just 3.1 overs to go. After Simran hit Pooja Vastrakar for four fours, including three in succession, in the penultimate over which produced 17 runs, exactly as many were required in the final one.

Left-arm spinner Sophie Ecclestone, who had earlier broken Velocity's top-order, gave away only 12. The target had come down to six off the last ball, but Simran's ambitious swing only ended up in the bat flying out of her hands.

Ecclestone had taken two wickets in her first spell. One of her victims was Kiran Navgire, who had caught everyone's attention with her stunning 69 off 34 balls in her first innings in the tournament on Thursday.

On this night, she could not score a single run off her first 12 balls. On the 13th, she stepped out, only to be bowled by Eccelstone.

The main feature of the Supernovas innings was some fabulous hitting from opener Deandra Dottin 62, 44b, 1x4, 4x6) and skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (43, 29b, 1x4, 3x6), two of the finest strokemakers in the women's game. Dottin and Harmanpreet had added 58 for the second wicket.

That was after Dottin and Priya Punia (28, 29b, 2x6) put on 73 for the first wicket. The West Indian was brilliant, of course, but she benefited from some poor catching.

SCOREBOARD

SUPERNOVAS
Priya Punia c Wolvaardt b Simran 28 *(29b, 2x6)*, Deandra Dottin b Deepti 62 *(44b, 1x4, 4x6)*, Harmanpreet Kaur c Shafali b Cross 43 *(29b, 1x4, 3x6)*, Pooja Vastrakar b Khaka 5 *(5b)*, Sophie Ecclestone c Yastika b Cross 2 *(3b)*, Sune Luus c Radha b Deepti 3 *(4b)*, Harleen Deol c Deepti b Simran 7 *(8b)*, Alana King (not out) 6 *(2b, 1x6)*; Extras (lb-1, w-4, nb-4): 9; Total (for seven wkts. in 20 overs): 165.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-73 (Priya, 9.3 overs), 2-131 (Dottin, 14.6), 3-144 (Pooja, 16.4), 4-148 (Harmanpreet, 17.3), 5-149 (Ecclestone, 17.5), 6-155 (Luus, 18.6), 7-165 (Harleen, 19.6).

VELOCITY BOWLING
Cross 4-0-29-2, Deepti 4-0-20-2, Khaka 4-0-27-1, Sneh 2-0-27-0, Simran 4-0-30-2, Radha 2-0-31-0.

VELOCITY
Shafali Verma c Taniya b Dottin 15 *(8b, 3x4)*, Yastika Bhatia c & b Ecclestone 13 *(9b, 3x4)*, Kiran Navgire b Ecclestone 0 *(1b)*, Natthakan Chantham lbw b Pooja 6 *(13b)*, Laura Wolvaardt (not out) 65 *(40b, 5x4, 3x6)*, Deepti Sharma c Pooja b King 2 *(5b)*, Sneh Rana b King 15 *(15b, 2x4)*, Radha Yadav c Harmanpreet b King 0 *(1b)*, Kate Cross c Taniya b Dottin 13 *(7b, 2x4)*, Simran Bahadur (not out) 20 *(10b, 3x4, 1x6)*; Extras (b-1, lb-1, w-9, nb-1): 12; Total (for eight wkts. in 20 overs): 161.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-29 (Shafali, 2.1), 2-36 (Yastika, 3.3), 3-38 (Kiran, 5.4), 4-58 (Natthakan, 8.6), 5-64 (Deepti, 10.6), 6-104 (Sneh, 15.3), 7-104 (Radha, 15.4), 8-117 (Cross, 16.5)

SUPERNOVAS BOWLING
Mansi 1-0-17-0, Ecclestone 4-0-28-2, Dottin 4-1-28-2, Pooja 3-0-32-1, Rashi 4-0-22-0, King 4-0-32-3.

Toss: Velocity; **Player-of-the-match:** Dottin.

Supernovas won by four runs to clinch title.

LIVE TELECAST

NBA: Sports 18, Voot Select, Vh1, MTV & Jio TV, 6.30 a.m.
Roland Garros 2022: Sony Ten 2 & 3 (SD & HD) & Sony LIV, 1.30 p.m. onwards
Hockey: Asia Cup 2022: SS Select 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 2.30 p.m.
F1: Monaco GP, SS Select 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 6.30 p.m.
IPL 2022: (final), Star Sports 1 SD & HD) & Hotstar, 8 p.m.

IN BRIEF

Butler keeps Heat in contention

BOSTON

Jimmy Butler had 47 points as Miami Heat forced the NBA Eastern Conference finals to a decisive seventh game by beating Boston Celtics 111-103 and drawing level 3-3 on Friday night. AP

Rajiv and Senthil among points in ARRC

CHENNAI

Honda Racing India team's rider duo of Rajiv Sethu and Senthil Kumar finished in the points in race one of the second round of the FIM Asia Road Racing Championship (ARRC) in Sepang, Malaysia. Starting 16th on the grid, Rajiv crossed the finish line 12th earning four points. Senthil Kumar starting 17th, finished 13th with three points.

McLaren gesture to honour Senna

MONTE CARLO

Ayrton Senna's logo will permanently feature on McLaren's F1 cars from the 2022 Monaco Grand Prix onwards. The addition to the MCL36 was unveiled at the Monaco Grand Prix, where Senna holds the record for race wins, with six victories, including five in a row for McLaren between 1989 and 1993. The Senna Foundation logo will appear on the car's halo. ANI

India exacts revenge on Japan

Manjeet and Rajbhar find the target in the 2-1 victory

ASIA CUP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAKARTA

The Indian men's hockey team scored two superb field goals to defeat Japan 2-1 in its first Super 4 league match and avenge the loss in the pool stage of the Asia Cup here on Saturday.

The defending champion, which lost 2-5 to Japan earlier, scored two eye-catching field goals through Manjeet (seventh minute) and Pawan Rajbhar (34th). Japan's lone goal came from a penalty corner through Takuma Niwa in the 17th minute.

Breaking through: Manjeet scored India's opener in the seventh minute. • FIH

Growing in confidence

Japan secured a penalty corner in the opening minute but India thwarted the danger. The Indians grew in confidence and got their footing as the match progressed.

A moment of brilliance from Manjeet gave India the lead. He made a fine solo run down the left flank after receiving a pass from Pawan Rajbhar and used the 3D skills to perfection to beat Takashi Yoshikawa under the bar.

Maninder Singh earned India another penalty corner in the 13th minute but Nilam Sanjeep Xess' effort was saved by the Japanese defence.

Japan started the second quarter on a promising note and secured a penalty corner in the 18th minute from which Niwa scored off a rebound after Ken Nagayoshi's initial flick was saved by the Indian custodian Suraj Karkera.

Pepped up by the goal, Japan continued to put pressure on the Indian defence and earned two more penalty corners, which the defence kept at bay.

Minutes later, Karthi Selvam failed to get past Japanese Yoshikawa from a one-on-one situation.

Rajbhar restored India's lead in the 34th minute, slotting home from close range after being set up by Uttam Singh's brilliant stick work.

Five minutes later, India conceded another penalty corner but Japan failed to capitalise.

Japan mounted relentless pressure on the Indian citadel but the Birendra Lakra-led backline stood firm to keep the lead intact.

Japan secured another penalty corner just three minutes from the final hooter, but India defended in numbers.

India will play Malaysia in its next Super 4 match on Sunday.

The results:

India 2 (Manjeet 7, Rajbhar 34) bt Japan 1 (Niwa 17).

South Korea 2 drew with Malaysia 2; Pakistan 5 bt Oman 2.

Bhagat makes semifinals

PARA BADMINTON

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DUBAI

Paralympic gold medallist Pramod Bhagat was made to toil hard by fellow junior Nehal Gupta before winning 18-21, 21-15, 21-11 and enter the men's singles SL3 semifinals at the fourth Fazza Dubai Para Badminton International 2022 here on Saturday.

In men's singles SL4 category, Tarun Dhillon also advanced to the semifinals with a 21-15, 20-22, 21-14 win over Korea's Cho Nadan.

The Haryana-based shuttler also entered the men's doubles SL3-SL4 semifinals partnering Nitesh Kumar.

The women's SL3 semifinal line up has three Indians with reigning world champion Manasi Joshi set to face Australia's Celine Aurelie Vinot while Mandeep Kaur will meet experienced Parul Parmar in the other last-four match.

Manasi is also through to the mixed doubles SL3-SU5 semifinal partnering Ruthick Ragupathi beating Bhagat and Manisha Ramadass 21-12, 16-21, 19-21.

Leclerc takes pole

Perez crashes on final lap

Pride of place: Leclerc being presented with the Pirelli Pole Position trophy. • GETTY IMAGES

MONACO GP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MONTE CARLO

Charles Leclerc topped the times to take pole position for Ferrari at his home Monaco Grand Prix on Saturday after Red Bull's Sergio Perez crashed on his final flying lap in a dramatic qualifying session.

The 24-year-old Monegasque driver emerged on top after a tense and dramatic session that saw his Ferrari team-mate Carlos Sainz qualify second to complete a one-two for the Italian team despite colliding with Perez's car.

Perez, who was unhurt after slamming sideways into the barriers at Portier, finished up third on the grid ahead of his Red Bull team-mate World champion and series leader Max Verstappen.

The grid: Row 1: Leclerc (Ferrari) & Sainz Jr. (Ferrari); **Row 2:** Perez (Red Bull) & Verstappen (Red Bull); **Row 3:** Norris (McLaren) & Russell (Mercedes); **Row 4:** Alonso (Alpine) & Hamilton (Mercedes); **Row 5:** Vettel (Aston Martin) & Ocon (Alpine).

Row 6: Tsunoda (AlphaTauri) & Bottas (Alfa Romeo); **Row 7:** Magnussen (Haas) & Ricciardo (McLaren); **Row 8:** Schumacher (Haas) & Albon (Williams); **Row 9:** Gasly (AlphaTauri) & Stroll (Aston Martin); **Row 10:** Latifi (Williams) & Guanyu (Alfa Romeo).

Miracle claims Speaker's Cup

BENGALURU: P. Shroff-trained Miracle (P.S. Chouhan up) won the Speaker's Cup, the feature event of the races held here on Saturday (May 28). The winner is owned by Mr. Mehernosh H. Deboo & Mrs. Auzita M. Deboo.

1. NEW MARKET PLATE (1,600m), rated 00 to 25: **RHAPSODY IN GREEN** (Trevor) 1, Shan E Azeem (J.H. Arul) 2, Lightning Flame (Bhawani Singh) 3 and Russian Romance (K. Nazil) 4. Not run: Commandpost. 4, 1-3/4 and 6-1/4. 1m, 39.46s. ₹17 (w), 11, 14 and 23 (p), SHP: 36, THP: 41, FP: 58, Q: 38, Trinella: 179 and 100, Exacta: 1,096 and 751. Favourite: Rhapsody In Green. Owners: Mr. Hemant Dharnidharka & Mr. Sultan Singh. Trainer: Neil Darashah.

2. DIABLO PLATE (DIV. II), (1,200m), rated 20 to 45: **TENALI** (S. Shareef) 1, Air Blast (J.H. Arul) 2, Millbrook (S. John) 3 and Silver Swift (Gaurav Singh) 4. 1-1/4, 3/4 and 1-3/4. 1m, 13.61s. ₹60 (w), 18, 14 and 12 (p), SHP: 37, THP: 43, FP: 195, Q: 97, Trinella: 354 and 147, Exacta: 4,382 and 2,951. Favourite: Air Blast. Owner: Mr. Meka Yugandhar. Trainer: Prasanna Kumar.

3. SANTORINI STAR PLATE (1,600m), rated 20 to 45, 4-y-o & over: **ONLY YOU** (Vinod Shinde) 1, Knotty City (Ashhad Asbar) 2, Aircraft (Dashrath Singh) 3 and Belvedere (Akshay K) 4. 1/2, 3-1/2 and 1-1/4. 1m, 38.68s. ₹187 (w), 37, 14 and 16 (p), SHP: 37, THP: 42, FP: 1,064, Q: 330, Trinella: 5,471 and 4,690, Exacta: 18,209 and 7,804. Favourite: Knotty City. Owners: Mr. P.J. Vazifdar, Mrs. P.J. Vazifdar, Mr. M. Rishad and Mr. Kersi H. Vachha. Trainer: S. Padmanabhan.

4. SOUTHERN EMPIRE PLATE (1,400m), maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms): **TOUGH COOKIE** (Anjar Alam) 1, Place Vendome (Trevor) 2, Aguila (P.S. Chouhan) 3 and Roudy (Richard Oliver) 4. 2, Nk and 1. 1m, 25.36s. ₹175 (w), 26, 12 and 33 (p), SHP: 47, THP: 75, FP: 878, Q: 134, Trinella: 3,264 and 1,819, Exacta: 30,360 and 3,253. Favourite: Place Vendome. Owners: Dr. Ian D'Cruz & Mr. Mohsd. Javeed Ghatala. Trainer: Irfan Ghatala.

5. LT. COL. GAUNT MEMORIAL TROPHY (1,400m), rated 40 to 65: **KING'S RANSOM** (P.S. Chouhan) 1, Arthur (Ashhad Asbar) 2, Keystone (K. Nazil) 3 and Capable (P. Siddaraju) 4. Lnk, 5 and Lnk. 1m, 24.96s. ₹18 (w), 11, 15 and 35 (p), SHP: 31, THP: 98, FP: 44, Q: 43, Trinella: 796 and 520, Exacta: 4,430 and 3,085. Favourite: King's Ransom. Owners: Mr. Vijay B. Shirke, Mrs. Vijay B. Shirke, Mr. Jay V. Shirke, Darashaw Bloodstock Pvt Ltd rep by. M/s. Keki D. Mehta and Dara K. Mehta. Trainer: P. Shroff.

6. SPEAKER'S CUP (1,600m), rated 60 to 85: **MIRACLE** (P.S. Chouhan) 1, Pride's Angel (Sandesh) 2, All Attractive (P.P. Dhebe) 3 and Mountain Lion (Dashrath Singh) 4. Hd, 1-1/4 and 1-1/2. 1m, 36.50s. ₹12 (w), 10 and 24 (p), SHP: 29, THP: 33, FP: 32, Q: 29, Trinella: 67 and 16, Exacta: 268 and 151. Favourite: Miracle. Owners: Mr. Mehernosh H. Deboo & Mrs. Auzita M. Deboo. Trainer: P. Shroff.

7. MYSTIC MEMORY PLATE (1,600m), rated 40 to 65, 4-y-o & over: **SIEGE PERILOUS** (Akshay K) 1, Etosha (Zervan) 2, Pink Jasmine (Sandesh) 3 and Winmylove (Gaurav Singh) 4. Not run: Schafenberg. 1-3/4, 1/2 and 3. 1m, 37.01s. ₹29 (w), 13, 12 and 14 (p), SHP: 33, THP: 39, FP: 72, Q: 34, Trinella: 102 and 53, Exacta: 255 and 159. Favourite: Etosha. Owners: Mr. P. Prasanna Kumar, Mrs. Ammu Ajit & Mr. Dean Stephens. Trainer: Prasanna Kumar.

8. DIABLO PLATE (DIV. I), (1,200m), rated 20 to 45: **FLYING QUEST** (Salman Khan) 1, Shabelle (Akshay K) 2, Mitsuro (J.H. Arul) 3 and Ocean Dunes (Mudassar) 4. 2, 2 and 2-1/4. 1m, 13.07s. ₹66 (w), 19, 10 and 23 (p), SHP: 54, THP: 43, FP: 178, Q: 51, Trinella: 252 and 253, Exacta: 1,898 and 884. Favourite: Shabelle. Owner and trainer: Mr. Mahmood Khan.

Jackpot: ₹16,001 (four tkts.).

Runner up: 857 (32 tkts.).

Treble (i): 9,110 (one tkts.); (ii): 357 (41 tkts.).

Imperial Power well prepped for a repeat win

BENGALURU: Imperial Power, who is in fine fettle, may score an encore in the War Hammer Million (1,400m), the chief event of the races to be held here on Sunday (May 29). False rails (width about 4m from 1,600m to the winning post) will be in position.

1 ASCOT PLATE (DIV. II), (1,200m), rated 00 to 25, 1-30 p.m.: 1. Mount View (8) S. John 62.5, 2. Mega Success (6) Vivek 62, 3. Foveal Vision (1) Santosh Raj 61.5, 4. Knotty In Blue (5) Gaurav Singh 61.5, 5. Chandra Kanta (9) S. Mubarak 60, 6. Light Of Love (4) B. Nayak 59.5, 7. Don's Den (7) Darshan 59, 8. Lightning Charlie (2) P. Surya 58.5, 9. Capital Gain (10) Mark 56.5, 10. Perfect Halo (11) Rajesh K 56.5, 11. Silent Triggar (3) M. Prabhakaran 56 and 12. Regal Force (12) Ashhad Asbar 53.5.

1. KNOTTY BLUE, 2. MOUNT VIEW, 3. REGAL FORCE

2 MEYDAN PLATE (DIV. II), (1,200m), rated 20 to 45, 4-y-o & over, 2-00: 1. Divine Blessings (7) S. John 60, 2. Chul Bul Rani (11) Ranjeet Singh 59, 3. Rightly Noble (8) P. Surya 59, 4. Shubankar (3) Vishal Bunde 59, 5. Capri Girl (4) Akshay K 58.5, 6. Embosom (6) J.H. Arul 58.5, 7. Mount View (–) (–) 58, 8. Rule Of Law (10) Kiran Rai 58, 9. She's All Class (5) Ashhad Asbar 58, 10. Anne Boleyn (2) Rayan 57.5, 11. Another Rainbow (1) Raghuveer Singh 56.5 and 12. Sling Shot (9) Jagadeesh 56.5.

1. CAPRI GIRL, 2. DIVINE BLESSINGS, 3. EMBOSOM

3 BEAUTIFUL BABE PLATE (1,200m), maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms), 2-30: 1. Alpha Domino (8) P.S. Chouhan 56, 2. Breeze Bluster (7) Darshan 56, 3. Forseti (1) Akshay K 56, 4. Fortunate Son (2) N.S. Parmar 56, 5. Prince O' War (6) Sandesh 56, 6. Sunway Lagoon (3) Mark 56, 7. Besuge (4) Arvind Kumar 54.5, 8. Blue Dew (9) Vishal Bunde 54.5, 9. Crown Consort (12) Suraj 54.5, 10. Meghann (11) Anjar Alam 54.5, 11. Peridot (5) Likith Appu 54.5 and 12. Swift (–) (–) Trevor 54.5.

1. CROWN CONSORT, FORTUNATE SON, 3. FORSETI

4 SWEET MEMORIES PLATE (1,400m), rated 20 to 45, 5-y-o & over, 3-00: 1. Three Aces (10) Vishal Bunde 60.5, 2. Queen Regnant (7) Bhawani Singh 59.5, 3. Hope Island (4) S. John 59, 4. See My Heels (6) Rayan 59, 5. Brooklyn Supreme (2) Nazerul 56.5, 6. Southern Power (11) Akshay K 56.5, 7. Tifanny (3) Sandesh 55.5, 8. Impeccable (8) Vinod Shinde 54, 9. Marco Polo (5) P.S. Chouhan 54, 10. Ozark (9) Kiran Rai 53.5, 11. Extraordinary (12) Arvind Kumar 52.5 and 12. Jersey Legend (1) Afroz Khan 50.5.

1. HOPE ISLAND, 2. SOUTHERN POWER, 3. TIFANNY

5 BRIG. R.C.R. HILL MEMORIAL CUP (1,400m), maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms), 3-30: 1. Disruptor (10) Akshay K 56, 2. Pinnacle Point (5) Sandesh 56, 3. Salento (11) Gaurav Singh 56, 4. True Marshal (8) P.S. Chouhan 56, 5. Arrowette (2) Trevor 54.5, 6. Geographique (4) Zervan 54.5, 7. Nikolina (3) Suraj 54.5, 8. Speaking Of Love (7) N.S. Parmar 54.5, 9. Stellar Gold (6) Bhawani Singh 54.5, 10. Triple Wish (9) J.H. Arul 54.5 and 11. Victoria Punch (1) Anjar Alam 54.5.

1. NIKOLINA, 2. SPEAKING OF LOVE, 3. ARROWETTE

6 WAR HAMMER MILLION (1,400m), 3-y-o only, (Terms), 4-00: 1. Imperial Power (2) Suraj 57, 2. Once You Go Black (4) Trevor 56.5, 3. Banksy (1) Vinod Shinde 52.5, 4. Yukan (5) Akshay K 52.5 and 5. Philosophy (3) Sandesh 51.

1. IMPERIAL POWER, 2. ONCE YOU GO BLACK

7 JAYACHAMARAJA WADIYAR CUP (1,400m), 4-y-o & over, (Terms), 4-30: 1. Ashwa Bravo (6) P.S. Chouhan 60, 2. Forest Flame (5) Trevor 60, 3. Taimur (3) Vishal Bunde 58.5, 4. Eternal Blaze (1) Bhawani Singh 55.5, 5. Victory Parade (2) Dasrath Singh 55.5 and 6. Speedster (4) Akshay K 54.

1. FOREST FLAME, 2. ASHWA BRAVO

8 MEYDAN PLATE (DIV. I), (1,200m), rated 20 to 45, 4-y-o & over, 5-00: 1. Almanach (9) Salman Khan 62.5, 2. Baltimore (7) S. John 61, 3. Imperial Blue (12) Akshay K 61, 4. Remontoir (5) Shreyas Singh 57, 5. The Strength (2) P. Siddaraju 56.5, 6. Princess Jasmine (6) S. Saqlain 55.5, 7. Spectacular (11) Sandesh 55, 8. Classic Charm (4) Kiran Rai 54.5, 9. Debonair (10) Nazerul 54.5, 10. Amazonite (3) Arvind Kumar 54, 11. Dallas Drifter (1) Khurshad Alam 53.5 and 12. Port Of Beauty (8) Gaurav Singh 53.

1. IMPERIAL BLUE, 2. SPECTACULAR, 3. REMONTOIR

9 ASCOT PLATE (DIV. I), (1,200m), rated 00 to 25, 5-30: 1. Able One (11) P.S. Chouhan 62.5, 2. Alexis Zorba (9) Likith Appu 62.5, 3. Emeraldo (8) Abhay Singh 62.5, 4. Knotty Woods (4) S. Shareef 62.5, 5. Tiger Returns (3) Nazerul 62.5, 6. Air Display (6) Salman Khan 62, 7. Chiraag (2) B. Nayak 61.5, 8. The Intruder (5) Khurshad Alam 61.5, 9. Mark One (7) R. Ajinkya 61, 10. Knotty Princess (12) Vishal Bunde 60, 11. Habanero (1) Tousif Khan 59.5 and 12. Handsome Rocky (10) Rajesh K 58.

1. MARK ONE, 2. ABLE ONE, 3. AIR DISPLAY

Day's best: IMPERIAL POWER

Double: CAPRI GIRL – FOREST FLAME

Jkt: 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9; Tr (i): 1, 2 and 3; Tr (ii): 4, 5 and 6; Tr (iii): 7, 8 and 9.

Rudrankksh in air rifle final

SPORTS BUREAU

Rudrankksh Patil shot 628.8 and made the final of men's air rifle in the fourth place at the shooting World Cup in Baku, Azerbaijan, on Saturday.

Olympian Deepak Kumar shot 626.8 in the RPO section. Paarth Makhija (624.7) and Dhanush Srikanth (623.8) placed 26th and 35th.

In women's air rifle, former World No. 1 Elavenil Valarivan shot 629.1 and placed ninth in a field of 66 shooters. She missed the final by 0.3 point.

Shreya Agrawal (627.0) and Ramita (626.2) finished 24th and 29th respectively in a field of 96

Harika taking 'baby' steps towards Olympiad

Expecting her first child, the Padma Shri awardee makes a difficult decision

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

During her sterling chess career, D. Harika has taken countless decisions over the board that have brought her joy and glory.

In the words of the three-time women's World championship bronze-medallist, "Chess means more to me than anyone can ever imagine. What would I do without chess in my life? "

With such a strong connection with the game, this Hyderabad-based Padma Shri awardee recently took the biggest off-the-board but chess-related decision.

Harika. • FILE PHOTO

Expecting her first child in August, Harika chose to be part of India's top women's team for the upcoming Chess Olympiad beginning in Mahabalipuram, Chennai, on July 29.

"The baby is due late in August and I understand I'm cutting it too fine. I always believe in doing what is in my control. I think the decision has much to do with my doctor, who has allowed me to go ahead.

Support

"My family stands firmly behind my decision. I am taking every precaution that I possibly can and following all directions of the doctor.

"Moreover, the All India Chess Federation (AICF) secretary Mr. Bharat Singh Chauhan and our team coach Grandmaster Abhijit Kunte have gone out of their way to extend all out help.

"They offered to accommodate my family members, my doctor, nurse or any person whom I asked for.

"What more, an ambulance will be parked at the hotel, 24x7, to meet any contingency. My family and I are truly touched by the generosity of Bharat Uncle and Abhijit Dada."

Initially, the AICF had plans to provide Harika with a huge well-furnished villa where she could stay with her family and medical staff during the competition.

But Harika has expressed her willingness to stay at the venue – Four-Points by Sheraton – to avoid any unnecessary travel during the 11-round event.

Record number of teams for Olympiad

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHENNAI

A record number of 343 teams from 187 countries will take part in the 44th Chess Olympiad to be held here from July 28 to August 10.

The Olympiad, the biggest ever global chess meet hosted by India has two specific categories –Open Section and women's section.

According to All India Chess Federation (AICF) secretary Bharat Singh Chauhan, the event director, "We have a record-breaking 187 countries registered with 189 teams in the open section and 154 in the women's section."

Previously, the Olympiad in Batumi, Georgia, held in 2018, had set a record with 184 and 150 teams in the open and women's sections from 179 countries.

World champion Magnus Carlsen of Norway, the highest ever rated player on the planet, will be the star attraction after he confirmed his participation in the mega event.

India, as the host country, is eligible to field an extra team in both sections and has an opportunity to field a third team in case of odd number of entries, the release said.

U.P. to meet Chandigarh for title

JR. HOCKEY

SPORTS BUREAU

Uttar Pradesh will take on Chandigarh in the final of the 12th Hockey India-National junior men's championship in Kovikpatti on Sunday. In the semifinals on Friday, UP beat Haryana 2-1 while Chandigarh overcame Odisha 3-1 via shoot-out after the teams were tied 2-each.

The results (semifinals): UP 2 (Vijay Kumar, Sharda Nand) bt Haryana 1 (Rajat); Chandigarh 3 (Raman, Harmanpreet, Amritpal) bt Odisha 1 (Sumit Kindo) (score tied 2-2 at the end of regulation time).

Abhijeet is tied second

SHARJAH MASTERS

SPORTS BUREAU

Abhijeet Gupta (6 points) caught up with two others at the second spot after beating Turkey's Mustafa Yilmaz in the eighth and penultimate round of the Sharjah Masters in Sharjah on Saturday.

Uzbekistan's Nodirbek Abdusattorov (6.5) continued to lead after a top-board draw with Romania's Bogdan-Daniel Deac.

S.P. Sethuraman won and joined Arjun Erigaisi, D. Gukesh at five points, while S.L. Narayanan, Aryan Chopra, Nihal Sarin, Abhimanyu Puranik and Aravindh Chithambaram drew to reach 4.5 points.

The results (involving Indians): Eighth round: Abhijeet Gupta (6) bt Mustafa Yilmaz (Tur, 5).

Arjun Erigaisi (5) drew with Haik Martirosyan (Arm, 5.5).

Pouya Idani (Iri, 5) drew with D. Gukesh (5).

Daniil Yuffa (Esp, 4.5) drew with S.L. Narayanan (4.5).

Jules Moussard (Fra, 4.5) drew with Aryan Chopra (4.5).

Nihal Sarin (4.5) drew with Abhimanyu Puranik (4.5).

Nodirbek Yakubboev (Uzb, 4.5) drew with Aravindh Chithambaram (4.5).

S.P. Sethuraman (5) bt Sankalp Gupta (4).

Temur Kuybokarov (Aus, 4.5) bt Raunak Sadhwani (3.5).

B. Adhiban (3.5) lost to Shamsiddin Vokhidov (Uzb, 4.5).

Momchil Nikolov (Bul, 3) lost to Surya Shekhar Ganguly (4).

Jolanta Zawandzka (Pol, 3) lost to Aditya Mittal (4).

BENGALURU ROUND-UP

Dhinidhi's fine run continues

Dhinidhi Desinghu continued her fine run with a new meet record in the Group II girls' 100m freestyle race on Saturday at the State sub-junior and junior swimming championship being held in Belagavi.

She went under a minute, clocking 59.64s to smash T. Sneha's long-standing junior record of 1:01.33, set way back in 2009. In all, five new meet records were set on the day.

Select results (winners all): Girls: Group I: 200m backstroke: Ridhima Veerendrakumar (2:25.21) (NMR; OR: Suvana Baskar, 2:25.58); **Group II: 100m freestyle:** Dhinidhi Desinghu (59.64) (NMR; OR: T. Sneha, 1:01.33); **400m freestyle:** Hashika Ramachandra (4:37.77) (NMR; OR: Hashika, 4:38.66); **50m breaststroke:** Vihitha Nayana (34.96) (NMR; OR: Vihitha, 35.41); **4x100m medley:** BAC-A (4:39.05) (NMR; OR: Dolphin, 4:40.51).

Aman Raj shines for BEML

Aman Raj top-scored with an unbeaten 91 as BEML RC, Bangalore thrashed BEML SC, KGF by nine wickets in the KSCA (Group II) second division tournament.

The scores: BEML SC, KGF 153/6 in 20 overs (Sathar Mohammad Adnan 60, S.D. Prem Kumar 31) lost to BEML RC, Bangalore 156/1 in 16.4 overs (Aman Raj 91 n.o., Yashwant 32).

DELL CC 113 in 19 overs (J.S. Ajit 34, Amey U.Shanbhag 26, K. Gagandeep 4/24) lost to Infosys CC 117/7 in 18.4 overs (K. Rakshith 35, Dhanu 5/14).

Indiabulls Housing & Finance Ltd 104/8 in 16 overs (H.S. Shashidhar 56) lost to Bangalore Division SA, SWR 105/4 in 15 overs (S. Bharath Kumar 29, Gaurov Shanbhag 28, P. Pramodh 30).

Continental Automotive CC 154/2 in 20 overs (Varun P.Annadani 78 n.o., Adithya Rajawaj 46) lost to RBI, RC 155/2 in 16 overs (Prajwal Pavan 72, S.A. Rishi Bopanna 56 n.o.).

Deccan Herald & Prajavani SC 182/2 in 20 overs (Sagar V.Naik 42, S.A. Sachin 55 n.o., S. Gunashekar 47 n.o.) bt BWSSB Employees Association 168/5 in 20 overs (Sourabh Manohar Naik 65, S.K. Abhishek 49).

HAL SC 165/6 in 20 overs (Rahul Prasanna 67, Gajjala Dileep Kumar 31, H. Sarvesh Raju 3/15) lost to LIC S&RC 166/5 in 19.3 overs (S.H. Swaroop 81 n.o., U. Karan 27).

ITC SC 133/7 in 20 overs (Abheet Kuthpady 73) lost to Bosch SC, Bangalore 134/4 in 19.3 overs (G. Harshith Raj 29, E.J. Jasper 54 n.o., Prajwal Reddy 31).

BEML Rail Coach 136/8 in 20 overs (N. Rohan 45, K. Muniraju 27) lost to Indian Air Force, Jalahalli 138/5 in 17.1 overs (Gaurav Raj Yadav 32, Piyush Goswami 38 n.o.).

Hutti Gold Mines CC, Hutti 162/5 in 20 overs (Amay Tejas 65, Ajmath Ali 28) lost to Union Bank of India 164/3 in 17.5 overs (T. Vinay 40, Rohan M.Yareshmi 62 n.o., Murgesh Mugabast 35 n.o.).

Karnataka Government Secretariat CC 174/4 in 20 overs (Prashanth Shetty 31, V. Prithvi 64 n.o., B. Mayur 28) bt LRDE SC 108/8 in 20 overs (S. Darshan 27).

KPTCL Sports Organisation 164/6 in 20 overs (S. Rajashekar 37, Udayakumar Anandappa Walmiki 47, C.S. Bharath Gowda 25 n.o., Sanjay 3/32) bt Railway Institute, Krishnarajapuram 101/8 in 20 overs (K.M. Vinod Kumar 25).

Tanishka bags silver

Karnataka's Tanishka K. Kalabhairav bagged the silver after losing to Ankolika Chakraborty 10-12, 5-11, 4-11 in the final of the under-11 girls' category of the 83rd Cadet & Sub Junior National table tennis championships in Indore.

Goans FC pips RS Sports

Goans FC edged RS Sports FC 3-2 in the BDFA B-division league championship, here on Saturday.

The results: Goans FC 3 (Pradeum Subba 7, Abhinay Chhetri 14, Karan Tamang 23) bt RS Sports FC 2 (C. Sandeep 34, 46); DYES FC 2 (Santhosh Tamata 9, 20) drew with Sree Gajanana FC 2 (Johnson Babu 25, B. Gobinath 39).

Al Fateh triumphs

Al Fateh FC defeated Mysore Vijayanagara FC 8-7 on penalties to win the BDFA C-division league south zone title, here on Saturday. The match was tied at 1-1 after regulation time.

The result (final): Al Fateh FC 1 (Shaik Inayath 70) bt Mysore Vijayanagara FC 1 (Sharath Singh 11) [8-7 on penalties].

Medvedev races past Kecmanovic

Swiatek wobbles but stays on course; Badosa and Sabalenka out

FRENCH OPEN

AGENCIES
PARIS

World No. 2 Daniil Medvedev advanced to the fourth round of the French Open after a stunning straight-set win over Miomir Kecmanovic on Saturday. The second seed eased past World No. 31 Kecmanovic 6-2, 6-4, 6-2 in an hour and 48 minutes.

Medvedev has not dropped a set in three rounds and will play former US Open champion Marin Cilic, who beat 37-year-old Frenchman Gilles Simon, for a place in the last eight.

Andrey Rublev defeated Cristian Garin 6-4, 3-6, 6-2, 7-6(11) to make the fourth round and will meet Jannik Sinner, who saved 11 set points in the second set before defeating American Mackenzie McDonald 6-3, 7-6, 6-3.

In cruise mode: Medvedev has not dropped a set in three rounds so far. • AFP

Going strong

In women's singles, World No. 1 Iga Swiatek was the only top-10 seed left standing after racking up her 31st straight win as third seed Paula Badosa and seventh-ranked Aryna Sabalenka crashed out in the third round.

Swiatek, the 2020 champion, dropped serve three times against the 95th-ranked Danka Kovinic of Montenegro before sealing a 6-3, 7-5 victory. Kovinic recovered from 1-4 down in the second set to lead 5-4 but the Pole steadied herself with a hold and a break before serving out for victory.

Swiatek next faces Chinese teenager Zheng Qinwen who made the last 16 on her debut when French veteran Alize Cornet, playing in her 61st consecutive Grand Slam, retired with a leg injury, trailing 6-0, 3-0.

Zheng becomes only the fourth Chinese woman to make the last-16 in Paris where Li Na won her landmark Grand Slam in 2011.

Badosa, who made the quarterfinals in 2021, retired from her last-32 match through injury when she was trailing Russia's Veronika Kudermetova 6-3, 2-1.

Sabalenka, the seventh seed, slipped to a 4-6, 6-1, 6-0 defeat to Italy's Camila Giorgi who is into the fourth round for the first time.

Bopanna's day out

Rohan Bopanna and Matwe Middelkoop saved five match points in the men's doubles third round to knock out Mate Pavic and Nikola Mektic 6-7(5), 7-6(3), 7-6 (10), the reigning Wimbledon champions.

Bopanna, thus, matched his best performance at the clay court major by reaching the quarterfinals, having done it four times in the past.

Later, Bopanna combined with Slovenia's Andreja Klepac in mixed doubles event to pull off an easy 6-1, 6-4 win over America's Asia Muhammad and Britain's Lloyd Glasspool.

Sania-Hradecka advance

In women's doubles, Sania Mirza and her Czech partner Lucie Hradecka, seeded 10th, defeated Slovenians Kaja Juvan and Tamara Zidansek 6-3, 6-4 to move into the third round.

Day in numbers

0 The number of Frenchwomen left in the singles draw

11 Set points saved by Sinner to win the second set against McDonald

17 Swiatek is the fourth woman in the Open Era to win 17 of her first 19 matches at Roland-Garros. Court, Evert and Seles won 18 of their first 19 contests

SUNDAY'S PICKS

MEN
1-Djokovic vs. 15-Schwartzman
3-Zverev vs. Miralles
5-Nadal vs. 9-Auger-Aliassime
6-Alcaraz vs. 21-Khachanov

WOMEN
17-Fernandez vs. 27-Anisimova
18-Gauff vs. 31-Mertens
23-Teichmann vs. Stephens
Trevisan vs. Sasnovich

THE RESULTS

Third round: Men: 7-Rublev bt Garin (Chi) 6-4, 3-6, 6-2, 7-6 (11); 11-Sinner (Ita) bt McDonald (USA) 6-3, 7-6(6), 6-3; 2-Medvedev bt 28-Kecmanovic (Srb) 6-2, 6-4, 6-2; 20-Cilic (Cro) bt Simon (Fra) 6-0, 6-3, 6-2; 12-Hurkacz bt Goffin (Bel) 7-5, 6-2, 6-1; 4-Tsitsipas (Gre) bt Ymer (Swe) 6-2, 6-2, 6-1. **Doubles:** 16-Bopanna (Ind) & Middelkoop (Ned) bt 2-Mektic & Pavic (Cro) 6-7(5), 7-6(3), 7-6(10).
Women: 1-Swiatek (Pol) bt Kovinic (Mne) 6-3, 7-5; 20-Kasatkina bt Rogers (USA) 6-3, 6-2; 11-Pegula (USA) bt 24-Zidansek (Slo) 6-1, 7-6(2); 28-Giorgi (Ita) bt 7-Sabalenka 4-6, 6-1, 6-0; Kudermetova bt 3-Badosa (Esp) 6-3, 2-1, retd.
Doubles (second round): 10-Sania & Hradecka (Cze) bt Zidansek & Juvan (Slo) 6-3, 6-4.
Mixed doubles (first round): 5-Bopanna & Klepac (Slo) bt Asia Muhammad & Glasspool (Bri) 6-1, 6-4.

Fallen seeds

- *Men:* 28-Kecmanovic
- *Women:* 3-Badosa, 7-Sabalenka, 24-Zidansek